



Price of a barrel
of petroleum
today:

US\$ 59.03[↑]
2.69

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

ANTI-WESTERN



Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei waves to the crowd in a public gathering in the city of Bijar, during his tour to the Kurdistan province, in western Iran, Monday, May 18, 2009. Iran's supreme leader urged the public Monday not to vote for pro-Western candidates in the June 12 presidential election, though he gave no clear indication of whether he is supporting hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

See *INTERNATIONAL NEWS*

SPORTS NEWS

SHARAPOVA RETURNS



Russia's Maria Sharapova returns a shot to Italy's Tathiana Garbin during their first round match of the Warsaw Open tennis tournament in Warsaw, Poland, on Monday May 18 2009.

See *Sports Today*

Presented by Aruba's featured performer Edjean Semeleer

A tribute to Frank Sinatra live at The Westin Aruba Resort



PALM BEACH - Edjean Semeleer, popular performer on the island, well known for his exceptional talent and fabulous shows, is going to be one of the highlights of The Westin Aruba Resort's 5th annual "Wine, Food & Art Festival" this coming weekend.

Read Page 3

The 2009 Championships start Thursday

Polesitters are gearing up for their incredible effort



ORANJESTAD - The fifteenth edition of Café the Plaza's Polesitting Championships are around the corner: on Thursday, May 21 the six sitters will step upon their perches and try to stay there, awake and in a good mood, during the coming four days. Roel Oude Avenhuis, Fritz Hibbert, Diana Wolthuis, Steven Steenhuizen, Otmar Cornes and Radjwatie Helen Mantgroelal are the heroes that we are talking about here.

They will try and shatter the record of 86 hours that will only be broken on Sunday evening, 11 pm. Fortunately, there are a lot of activities planned to keep the sitters, their fans, well-wishers, sponsors and family members as well as the public entertained. The 'fab six' climb their poles at 8 am.

Continued on Page 5

TODAY'S
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each one



**TUESDAY
BIG MAC**[®]

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Driftwood Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant offers diners the ultimate dining experience in freshly line caught fish.

ORANJESTAD - Why should seafood enthusiast and other diners alike go to Driftwood Restaurant? Well let's start by mentioning that their fish is caught daily by the owner himself and prepared by a local chef. "Just like mama makes it." The food is fresh, the staff is friendly, and the place is definitely buzzing. If you want to catch your own fresh fish and can't stay for a sit-down dinner, enjoy their Charter Fishing trip and have them prepare it for you. Trust me; it doesn't get any fresher than this: From pier to plate as their motto says.



Fried fish would be the common choice, but you can get your entrée broiled, grilled or baked. However you can indulge in the more guilty options for lobster, Alaskan king crab legs, grouper, shrimp, Black Angus tenderloin and so forth. Ease your

conscience and add a salad or go all out and try their delicious crab cakes, fish soup, garlic escargots, lobster crepe and coconut shrimps before your hearty entrée.



While seafood stars at Driftwood, fish-phobic diners will not go hungry. They have a staggeringly vast menu, which doesn't miss much of anything, from authentic Aruban seafood, lobster, Alaskan king crab legs to chicken, lamb or steaks.

Q: Why do we serve only fresh line caught fish?

A: How fresh would you be after a net caught fish frozen import from Asia?



Driftwood restaurant has a long tradition of serving the best seafood and steaks for over 20 years!

Don't forget to make this a must dine at restaurant while on vacation, you are sure to indulge in some great tasty seafood.



Restaurant information and reservation: open daily (closed on Tuesdays) from 5pm-10:30pm. Tel. 583-2515. Located at Klipstraat 12 in the heart of downtown Oranjestad, within driving distance from the resorts. □



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Moby Dick's offers Free samples of the menu from 6 - 8 pm

Mermaids love Moby Dick's... Seafood that will touch your SOUL

PASEO HERENCIA - For a great and unique lunch and Dinner experience, you definitely have to go to Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant.

This is the only place on the island to savor the legendary Bloody Oyster - the ultimate delicacy only known by deep sea connoisseurs who take

pleasure in its delight on Sunday mornings. No need to wait for Sunday for this deep sea concoction of Fresh Oysters, Cooked Shrimp, Cold Vodka, Tomato Juice, Tabasco, Lime Juice, Black Pepper and Celery. Moby Dick's weekly lunch specials include the Famed Fish & Chips (Beer battered grouper fillet with malt vinegar & chips for only \$11.95.)

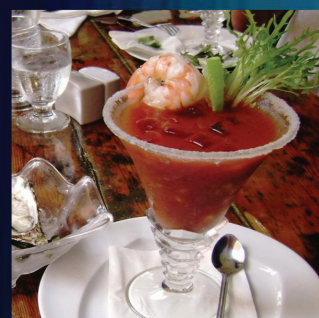
The Amazing Angus Wrap and other Memorable Sandwiches are absolutely delicious just as their dearly loved desserts. The inconceivable cocktails are even more reasons to visit this great place.

A must visit lunch appointment for great value, amazing décor, picture perfect outdoor terrace, across the street from the High-Rise hotels at the popular Paseo Herencia Mall.

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11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
For reservations please
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Mr. Brian Reeve
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(297) 586-8333 Open
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Shopping, Palm Beach, Aruba
mobydicksaruba@gmail.com**

Presented by Aruba's featured performer Edjean Semeleer

A tribute to Frank Sinatra live at The Westin Aruba Resort



PALM BEACH - Edjean Semeleer, popular performer on the island, well known for his exceptional talent and fabulous shows, is going to be one of the highlights of The Westin Aruba Resort's 5th annual "Wine, Food & Art Festival" this coming weekend.

Edjean will be performing live on stage with a live band giving tribute to the legendary Frank Sinatra.

As we all know, Frank Sinatra, or Ol' Blue eyes as he was also called, was one of the the most influential artists of all time.

We remember him dearly for his numerous original songs and also songs made popular by him. "New York, New York", "All of me", "Strangers in the night", "My Way" and "That's life" are only a few songs that let us reminisce and travel down memory lane to the 40's, 50's and even 60's.

All of these and more will



be brought back live by the man himself, Edjean Semeleer.

Get your tickets now at CD and More at Cumana, at the lobby of The Westin Aruba Resort or by calling telephone 563 3333 for delivery.

Tickets are available at the price of USD\$58.00 and are going fast! Get yours today and be part of this unforgettable celebration with good music, food and wine at The Westin Aruba Resort on the 23rd of May. □



Kiwanis Key Club Colegio Arubano installs new board



PALM BEACH – A beautiful ceremony was recently held in the grand ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino.

The red carpet gala was the installment of the new board for the Kiwanis Key Club Colegio Arubano. The organization consists of alumni of Coleio Arubano who contribute volunteer work for different organizations in our community.

The new board consists of: Nurianne Helder as President, Christoffer Everon Vice-president, Marrienne Faro as Secretary and Jasmiera Wiersma as Tresurer.

Other members include: Zayron Wever as “Fundraising Director”, Aveline Figaroa as “Service Director”, Tiana Leon as “Social Director” and Lindsay Riley as Director of Public Relations.

During the evening, donations were made to the community including: Mr. Fun of “Ban Uni Man pa Cria nos Muchanan” received a check, as well as Mrs. Abath-Muller of “Kinderhuis Imeldahof” who received uniforms for their athletic teams.

Also during the evening, 5 new members were installed: Xion Herrera, Emmy Robles, Felipe Cardona, Melanie Ruiz and Nathan van der Linden. □



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Polesitters are gearing up for their incredible effort

Continued from Front Page

On Day One, DeeJay Jeroen will keep the beat from 3 to 7 pm. After that world champions and Caribbean champions Salsa Dancing will teach a class from 9 – 10 pm, during the break in the mellow sounds of Grupo Melao. Grupo Melao starts at 8 pm on Thursday Evening.

On Day Two, Friday, May 22, things will be swinging once more when popular band Tsunami is playing from 9 pm until midnight. Day Three will see an afternoon filled with Kids' activities with clown Tio Carlos in action. Health Club Santos teaches a workshop Cheerleading from 4 -

5 pm and the fabulous group The Equators are performing from 9 pm. The final day of the Championships has a 4 -5 workshop Streetdance courtesy of Santos.

During the entire four-day happening there will be activities like the Living Fruit Machine, a Nail Hitting contest, Bonky the Rodeo Bull, trike riding and musical chairs. Every evening there will be raffles and Cool FM radio station is going to be broadcasting live. Main sponsors include Discovery Travel, Vakantievilla.nl, Balashi and Digicel as well as Aruba Wine and Dine. Benefitting charity of the 2009 Polesitting Championships is the Clown Doctors of Aruba foundation. □



Netherlands Antilles starts second round of tax negotiations with Jamaica

WILLEMSTAD, Curacao -- The second round of negotiations between the Netherlands Antilles and Jamaica on Double Taxation Avoidance starts on Monday in Kingston. During the first round of negotiations which took place on the island of Curacao in January 2009 considerable progress was made. It is expected that after the second round the texts can be initialed by the chief negotiators of both countries. A Double Taxation Agreement is designed to protect against the risk of being taxed twice where the same income is taxable in two states. According to the State Secretary of Finance, Alex Rosaria, a Double Taxation Agreement will among other things, increase cross border investment between the Netherlands Antilles and Jamaica, foster investor confidence of the Netherlands Antilles as tax jurisdiction and deepen commercial relations between the two countries. "Realization of a tax treaty with Jamaica is a major step in the process of deeper and broader cooperation between our country and Jamaica and the Caribbean," Rosaria said. The Netherlands Antilles currently has three Double Taxation Agreements (Netherlands, Aruba and Norway) and four Tax Information Exchange Agreements (Australia, USA, Spain and New Zealand). □

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Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

Double Points from 11am - 1pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

WEDNESDAY

Double Points from 12pm - 2pm
Prize Give Away from 4pm - 7pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

Double Points from 11am - 1pm
Prize Give Away from 4pm - 7pm
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THURSDAY

Double Points from 12pm - 2pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

Double Points from 11am - 1pm
Wii Raffle @ 8pm
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FRIDAY

Double Points from 12pm - 2pm
Wii Raffle @ 9pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

Double Points from 11am - 1pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

SATURDAY

Double Points from 12pm - 2pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

Double Points from 11am - 1pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

SUNDAY

Double Points from 12pm - 2pm
Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

For more information, call: 523-6318 or 523-6437

www.arubacrystalcasinos.com • www.arubaseaportcasinos.com

Rufo Wever School of Music presents:

“Un Anochi Placentero with Piano Music” in ‘Biblioteca Nacional’

ORANJESTAD - This coming Sunday evening May 24th 2009 at 7.30 PM: Organized by Piano teachers from the Aruban Music school, “Scol di Musica Rufo Wever”, Catherine Provence-Hanrath, Johnny Croes and Rob Rijnbout. Pupils and teachers will play music from Antonin Dvorák, Johannes Brahms and Rufo Wever a.o.

Everybody is invited, the entrance fee is AWG 5,-, drinks included.

This concert is also sponsored by Martijn Trading. □



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Maincourse: Fishstew or Tenderloin pincho on spicy vegeables or Mexican chickenplatter

Dessert: Brownie with icecream or fruitsorbet with ice cream

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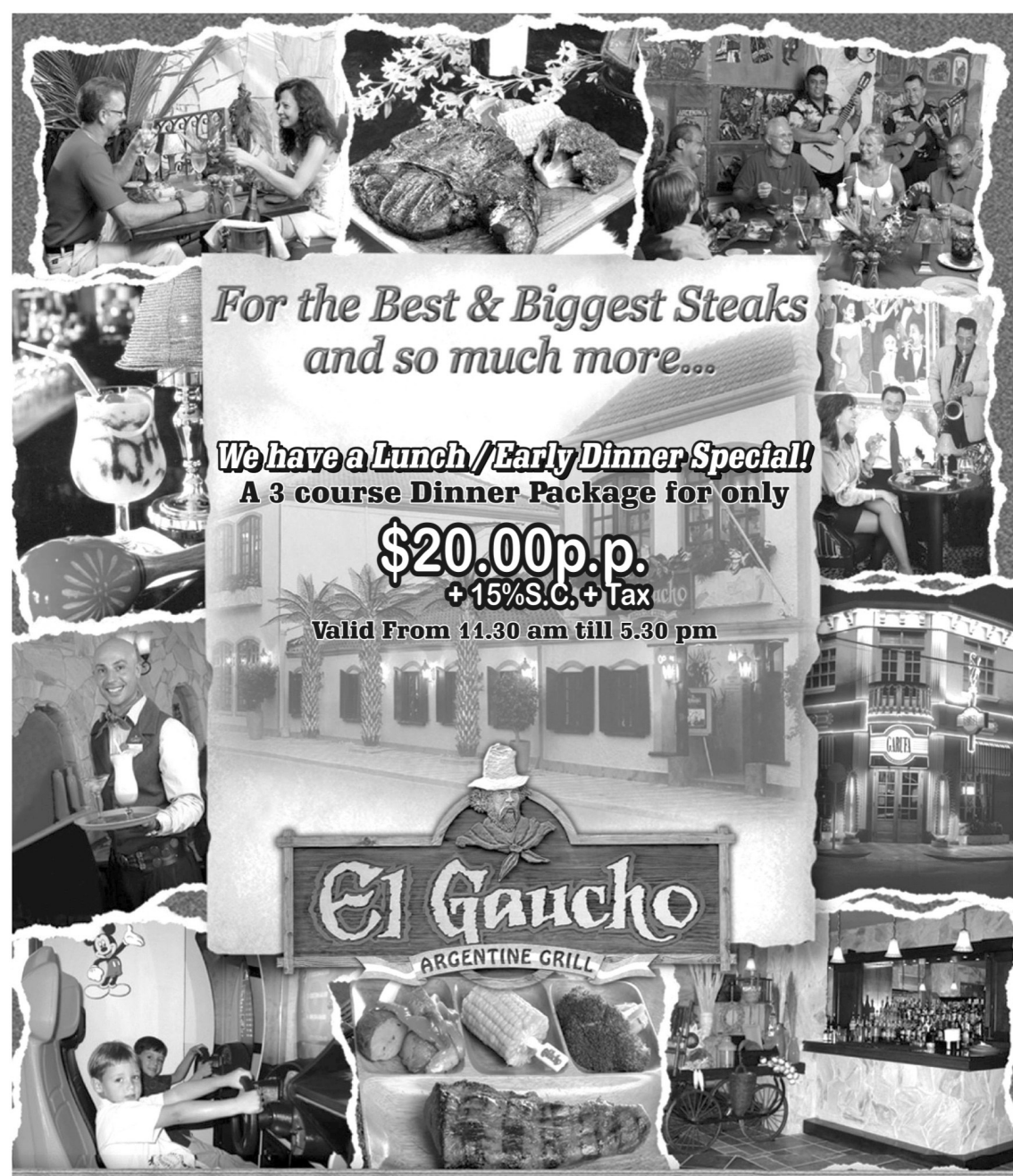
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Come and pick up your prizes! Café Rembrandt's Queen's Day celebrations were a big hit

PALM BEACH - The first Queen's Day celebrations of Café Rembrandt at South Beach were a big hit. Although the planned festivities were overshadowed by the terrible happenings in Apeldoorn, Holland, where a madman tried to kill the Dutch Royal family, the 30th April, the day stood out for its wonderful ambiance and Dutch 'gezelligheid'. The flea market drew quite a lot of vendors and buyers; Café Rembrandt's owners even scored a great portrait of young Princess Juliana and her fiancée Prince Bernhard. "Not a real Rembrandt, but a good buy all the same," they said afterwards.

After the morning's flea market there was a children's afternoon with clown Tio Carlos and a drawn-out Happy Hour which moved seamlessly into the evening. During the entire day tickets for a lottery had been sold, and between 10.30 and 11.30 pm a 'man innocent' (an innocent hand) drew the winning tickets. Proceeds of the raffle went to the Clown Doctors of Aruba foundation.

Several prizes have not been collected as yet. These are: a weekend stay at Casa del Mar (nr. 22222), a gift certificate from Salt & Pepper Restaurant for AWG. 100,-- (22225), a two-person Heli beach tour (2241), a US \$50.— gift certificate from Matthew's Restaurant, 15 days free childcare from

ABC Peuterschool (tickets 22287, 22299, 22387), Tast of Belgium Early Bird menu for 2 (22343), Café Restaurant Bingo, lunch for 2 (22365/22411) and Pam Pam Bar/Restaurant dinner for 2 (22384). The winners can pick up their prizes at Café Rembrandt. □





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The biggest stage production in the
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\$49

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At the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino

Athena & Jason exchange vows & rings on the beach



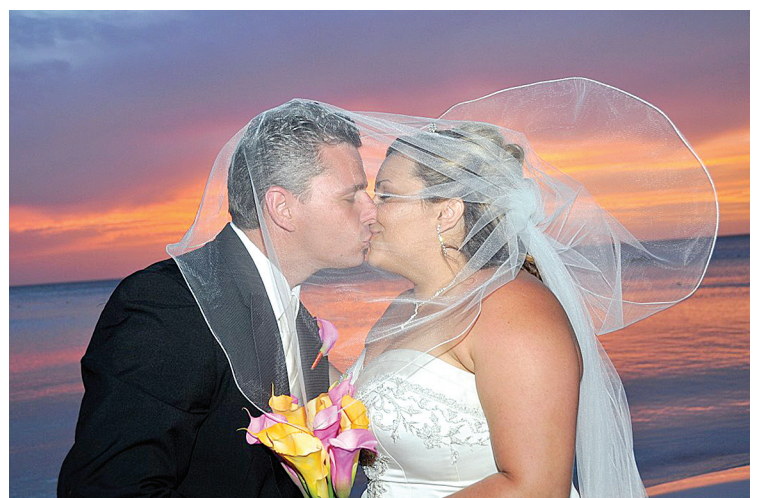
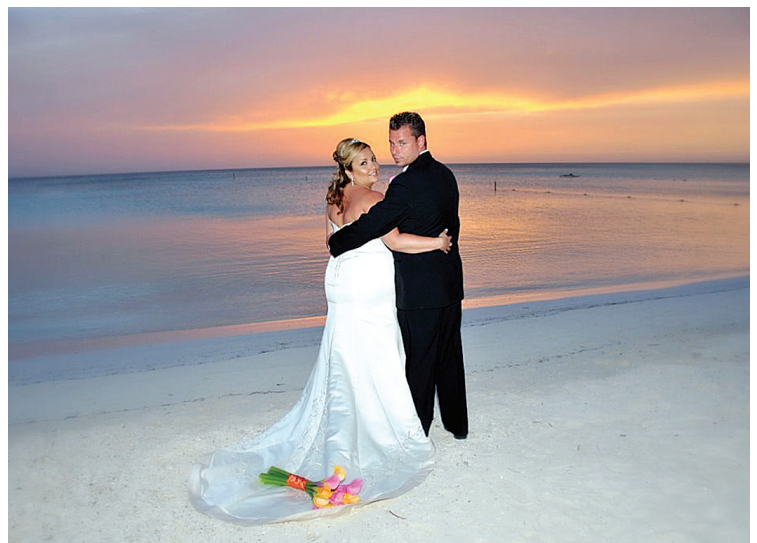
PALM BEACH – Athena Cox & Jason Hayes were married on the beach at the Aruba Marriott Resort last Friday night. The couple pledged eternal love to each other with the exchange of vows and rings. The ceremony was officiated by Rev Andy Osborne and coordinated by Desire Biker of the Marriott Resort. Although the afternoon was a bit cloudy, just as Athena and



Jason said I do, a huge bright orange sun came bursting out of the clouds. The romantic toes-in-the-sand ceremony was witnessed by

family and friends from back home. Congratulations from Aruba Today. ☐

~ Photos by Julia Renfro



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LEARN HOW YOU CAN BECOME
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EAGLE BEACH - Oasis Luxury Condominiums is a Mediterranean-style designed complex located on the prestigious Eagle Beach right next to Chalet Suisse consisting of a total of 35 units distributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens

**35 EXCLUSIVE OCEAN VIEW UNITS
STARTING IN THE LOW 400'S**

tributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens

with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax.

Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners.

Construction on Oasis at Eagle

Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer. The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

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Double your prize with powerball **B-5** or **I-21**
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When you cover all 4 corners within 8 calls!

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Number 7.....\$150
Small Kite.....\$200
Champagne Glass...\$250
Full Card.....\$500



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Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse also offering Spa Cuisine



PALM BEACH – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Executive Chef Matt Boland and restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing flavors with citrus, spice and

herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains. "We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," adds Boland, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs. "The Sunset Grille kitchen," Boland reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banter, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine."

Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred," the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon and Scallops served with the



popular Soba Noodles.

The Sunset Grille always endeavors to exceed guests' expectations by purchasing the very best products available and preparing them in accordance with a combination of "tried and true" as well as cutting edge contemporary methods, Boland explains. Simply put, the Sunset Grille culinary team buys the best products, and cooks them the best way they know, refusing to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and



cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □

Fun Island Living, at T.H. Palm & Company



Palm Beach -- The beautiful T.H. Palm & Company offers an exceptional, upscale shopping experience aptly described as "Fun Island Living."

Owned by long time Aruba resident Jodi Tobman who has several other boutiques on the island, Jodi reports she had a lot of fun creating this magnificent jewel of a boutique which first opened its doors in June of 2004.

A wide variety of distinctive items are on display on interesting antique décor pieces, from luscious silk tropical shirts for men to stylish resort wear and exclusive artisan

jewelry for women. The theme of "Fun Island Living" is apparent in the wide selection of accessories for home including tropical barware and serving pieces, books, artwork and lamps. There are handbags "to live for" and an array of gifts for children of all ages as well as a variety of novelty gift items for pets.

When visiting T.H. Palm & Company, we suggest you take your time as you will need to browse from floor to ceiling in order not to miss anything. Larger items can be shipped to your home address at a nominal fee and shipping is always an available

option.

For those who find it hard to choose from among all the enchanting objects in stock or for those who do not have time to shop, a Personal Shopper service is available to assist at no extra charge, by appointment, please.

T.H. Palm & Company is conveniently located in front of the Playa Linda Beach Resort and offers late night shopping and convenient parking. Open daily from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Fridays open until 11 p.m. Telephone +297 586 8909. Email: orders@salamanderholdings.com □



Acoustic Soul did it again, ever better!



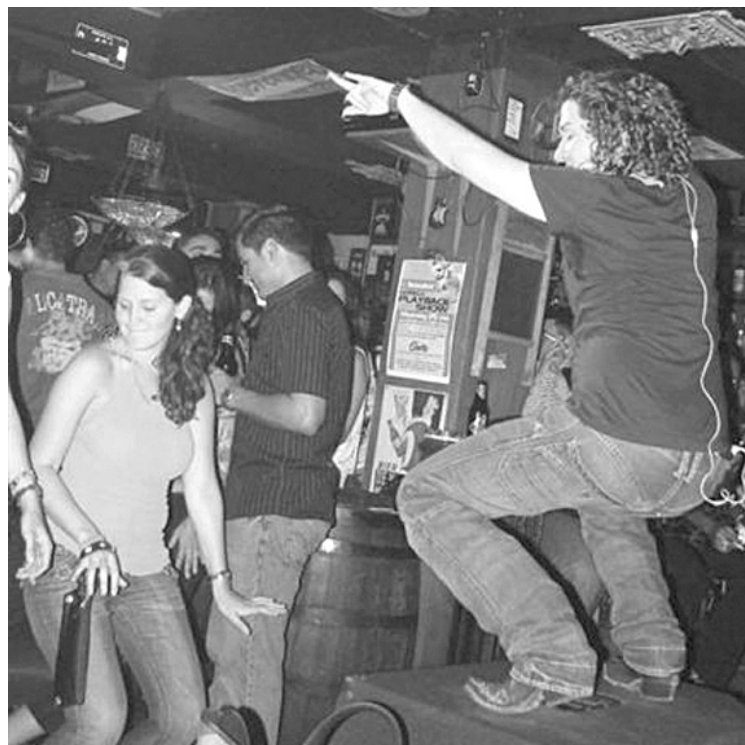
ORANJESTAD -- Jairo Boekhoudt, Armin Solognier, Jose Creeze, Angelo Kock and Jeremy Bonarriba, better known as ACOUSTIC SOUL, gave a fantastic concert Saturday night at Café Chaos, after midnight, an encore performance after they rocked the house with their electrifying Acoustic Soul Gone Metal, on Queen's Birthday.

Vocalist Jairo Boekhoudt reports that Aruba's only Rock party band staged yet another comeback, this time to a dancing, prancing, rocking, rolling and singing audience.

"The reception this time was even warmer," Jairo says, "and we already thought we brought the house down last time; our fans came back for more, in bigger numbers, with a higher level of energy, and together the band and the audience, had a blast."

Besides singing a number of times a week with Billongo, the house band at Mr Jazz by Chuchó Valdes, Jairo also serves as the supper club's marketing guru.

Pictured here, the band in memorable action, at Café Chaos. □



Duncan discusses concerns about the state of affairs in St. Maarten

P H I L I P S B U R G - - Constitutional and Home Affairs Minister Roland Duncan says there is much concern at every level of the governmental structure about the overall situation in St. Maarten and the several concerns were discussed when he met with Lt. Governor Franklyn Richards on May 13.

In an interview with The Daily Herald, Duncan said his discussions with the Lt. Governor had been held in keeping with his ministerial responsibilities for good governance and he concurred with the Lt. Governor's view that the Democratic Party (DP) and the National Alliance (NA) should be given about one month to try to put together a new government.

In the interview in which he addressed issues such as the likelihood of the imposition of higher supervision, what could trigger such intervention, and concerns of the Dutch Government, he also accused the Island Government of running away from making big decisions that needed to be made.

He said the current situation was "politically sensitive" and while he had discussed it with Richards, those discussions should not be seen as his seeking to interfere or to create the wrong impression of "higher supervision or whatever."

He said he agreed that the two political parties needed some time, because the talks would not be merely about how many portfolios and who would get what.

"It is more an issue about the signature – what policies will prevail, whose party's principles or positions will prevail in the governing programme."

"The National Alliance

is saying 'I want the overwhelming number of issues to come from our party philosophy.' That's a political position. What they are saying is that so far the credibility of the current government – the governing party – is very low, 'so if I am to join with you in government, I want to have a way to show that it is a new ball game and that there is a new government with credibility ... new policies, new programmes, new faces.'" He said that "with all due respect to (Democratic Party leader, Commissioner) Mrs. Wescot-Williams, she is the one who lost her majority, so you can't blame the Alliance for her losses and you can't blame them for demanding that the new government must reflect a difference from what exists now."

State of affairs
Duncan, who was named by the National Alliance for his ministerial position, said the Governor, the Central Government and the Lt. Governor were all very concerned about the overall state of affairs.

"There is serious concern about the situation in St. Maarten – not just the current political situation but the overall situation pertaining to integrity, credibility, how the government is being put together. ... We are willing to assist.

We are not engaging in empty criticisms or political manoeuvrings. There is a concern and unless people recognise that there are serious concerns and there is need for better performance, then we are not going anywhere."

"I am assuming my responsibility. ... We haven't had a special agenda point (in the Council of Ministers), but every time there is a meeting we discuss what's going on

and this is a matter of concern. It is a matter of serious concern and the Prime Minister has already been in touch with the Lt. Governor asking what's going on," Duncan explained. He said the issues he had discussed with the Lt. Governor included Good Governance, aspects of the WODC report, the construction of Country St. Maarten and the need for a Code of Ethics.

"It is a serious matter. You have to take into account Holland's constant nagging, if you want to call it that, about St. Maarten isn't ready yet to become a country. While they (Holland) are not too clear, if you look at (State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Ank) Bijleveld-Schouten's reports and letters, you can pick up what the complaints are about," Duncan explained.

He added: "For instance, she is complaining that St. Maarten promised to install a Casino Gaming Board, that there is no code of ethics in place, that there is no Ombudsman law as yet even though (PPA leader) Gracita (Arrindell) had come up with an initiative several years ago.

"All that is part of the integrity process and if you don't do it they will say you are not implementing the law. The Island Territory of St. Maarten has to enact that Ombudsman Law."

Deadlines
He said the Dutch were insisting that these things be in place before St. Maarten moves to Country Status, because they had been promised and agreed on.

Curaçao, he noted, is now appointing a second Ombudsman for the Island territory of Curaçao, which has had an Ombudsman for six years.

He also noted that it had been agreed specifically a few years

ago when Marcel Gumbs was State Secretary that a set of integrity measures – "like the law on political parties and all that" – would be put in place. He said that while these measures would be essential for country St. Maarten, they should be enacted and executed from now and should play a role in the governing of the Island Territory today.

In the case of the corporate governance legislation passed in the Island Council recently, the deadline for execution by changing the boards, etcetera, is August 1 this year and everything should be done to meet that deadline.

He said that while no specific deadlines were in place for things such as the Ombudsman, Bijleveld-Schouten was saying, "Hey, get up and do it."

Also, while the Government apparently is now contending that a Casino Gaming Control Board is not necessary, the government should explain why in God's name they had agreed to it.

And, noting that Holland is also interested in seeing a Code of Ethics in place and is wondering why one is not being enacted, he said, "When you look at what Holland is grumbling about, it is about the people who are responsible for good governance now and the image and the credibility of St. Maarten, and the people (who are responsible) – is the current Executive Council."

Credibility
He said that while Wescot-Williams' response to the WODC report had been to complain that the responsibilities were those of the Central Government, that was not entirely true, for while 95 per cent of the report was about Central Government agencies and failings, there were a couple of sections

that talked about land deals and the susceptibility of local politicians to bribes and certain crimes, and these things were proving to be true.

"That part of the report St. Maarten needs to respond to and act on. Is it true that there are land deals and land peddling going on in St. Maarten? Hell, yes! And that has nothing to do with country St. Maarten. It has to do with the Island Territory's functioning. That's where we need to respond and create credibility now. That's part of the discussion I had with the Lt. Governor," Duncan explained.

And, referring to the current lame-duck status of the Island Government, he said he shared the view that the situation was not yet ungovernable, in that the stage had not been reached where "at a certain point in time decision-making stagnates and the Executive Council cannot carry out its plans and cannot function because it doesn't have majority support."

He noted, however, that that stage could be reached shortly should, for example, the government have to deal with the budget for 2010, but could not muster the required support.

Higher supervision
Asked what scenario would have to exist to trigger his intervention or the intervention of the Council of Ministers, he said that was a bridge he would have to cross should the need arise. He noted that while both the Islands Regulation – Article 98 – and the Kingdom Charter – Article 43 (i) and (ii) – had provisions for intervention, there was no law that said specifically what should be done if there was a so-called ungovernable situation, or how to impose higher supervision.

"In 1991-92 they did it (imposed higher supervision) in St. Maarten in a certain fashion. In Curaçao they did it in the '60s in a similar but different fashion. There is no specific rule about what to do or how to do it, so you have to tailor your action to the moment and to the issue.

Continued on Next Page

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Duncan discusses concerns about the state of affairs in St. Maarten

Continued from Previous Page

"In my mind, I would prefer not to say that I will do this, this, and this. I would prefer to see how things develop. If it is a matter of, let's say, being stuck on the budget, maybe, we don't have to do a general total measure to remove government, but we need a financial measure, then we aim it at that particular aspect," he explained.

He continued: "Because the law is vague ... supervision has to be applied from a federal level to only where there is a failing. I don't want to co-govern the island of St. Maarten. That is not the intention. I don't want to interfere in the government either. We will have to be very clear and specific. ..."

Asked, for example, what would the case be should the Central Government determine that there is a failing on the part of the Island Government in introducing and applying a code of ethics for commissioners, he said he had offered the Lt. Government his support and assistance in that respect.

He said that if the Lt. Governor was experiencing difficulties in that area, the Central Government could assist in several ways: By helping to write it, by helping to set it up, wringing some arms or by "getting on bad without calling it higher supervision or interference."

Duncan also stressed that because the law was not specific and didn't prescribe what to do about higher supervision, he didn't "want to wait until the pot bust to go and take action." His preference would be to "maybe get involved in talks, hear what the problem is and help to deal with the matter."

"We are in virgin territory. The law gives you certain broad guidelines and what I am trying to do is to work within that so that we can avoid or avert any clashes and be able to anticipate beforehand and deal with it, rather than wait until the pot bust and then you are told that you failed."

Running

Duncan also contended that several key issues – including those related to the Social Insurance Bank and the Central Bank – had not yet been resolved and said the politicians were guilty of running away from dealing with them. "Yes, there are some big decisions to be made and they run from making big decisions." He said St. Maarten's failure to get its act together could impact everything in the national thrust to dismantle the Netherlands Antilles, for the country could not be dismantled unless the island territories were in a position to accept the dismantled entities.

He said that while St. Maarten was preparing to leave the Netherlands Antilles and there should be a seamless transition, "we have not had an alternative social security system proposed (and) there are no arrangements yet for accommodating the new and larger government," and to the extent that things were not in place, the entire process could be affected.

"If we don't get the Netherlands Antilles dismantled by January/February next year, we will be forced to have a federal election again. And we seem to be heading there." (Courtney Gibson) □



With a Yes, process can continue, says Bijleveld

~But target date 2010 will be hard to meet~

THE HAGUE--Now that the people of Curaçao have voted yes to constitutional reform, the process of dismantling the Netherlands and creating new entities can continue, said Dutch State Secretary of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten on Saturday. She doubted, however, whether the process of dismantling could be technically completed by January 1, 2010.

Even if the Curaçao people had voted No, the Dutch Government would have continued the process of new constitutional relations in the Dutch Kingdom with Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, said Bijleveld-Schouten. The first three islands will become part of the Netherlands as so-called 'public entities,' while St. Maarten is striving to attain country status.

"But the process would have become a lot more complicated if a majority of the people in Curaçao had voted No," said Bijleveld-Schouten in an interview with The Daily Herald.

Dismantling the Netherlands Antilles as a country would have become a very complex matter without Curaçao's support, she said.

Wrapping up the dismantling the Netherlands Antilles by January 1, 2010, however, will be technically difficult, if not impossible, said the State Secretary. January 1, 2011 would be more realistic.

This has to do with the trajectory of approving the many Kingdom laws and other legislation that are necessary to eliminate the country the Netherlands



Antilles and to establish the new entities. It is a lengthy trajectory, involving several parliaments.

The Dutch Council of Ministers on Friday, the day of the referendum, approved a legislation package for Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius, also referred to as the BES islands. The package included the general law establishing the BES as a public entity, the WolBES and several legislation proposals regarding the financial/fiscal structure of the three islands. The package is scheduled to go to the Second Chamber today, Monday.

The draft laws for the countries Curaçao and St. Maarten, to dismantle the Netherlands Antilles and the amendment to the Kingdom Charter are now at the Council of State for advice.

The Second Chamber should handle the draft laws in the later part of 2009.

It is expected that the Second Chamber will submit amendments, meaning that it will take more time for the legislation to pass through Parliament.

The Antillean Parliament will have the opportunity to respond to the possible amendments.

After the Second Chamber and the Antillean Parliament have agreed on the package, the First Chamber will handle the legislation. Legal experts are assuming that this will be late 2010. "Dismantling a country is a complicated process.

It takes time. Curaçao and St. Maarten also have to establish the necessary regulations and legislation to be able to function as a country," said Bijleveld-Schouten. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Stocks jump on renewed optimism on housing, banks



By **SARA LEPRO** and **MADLEN READ**,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — Reassuring news about housing and banking on Monday convinced investors to return to the stock market.

The Dow Jones industrial average shot up 235 points, making up three-quarters of last week's losses. All the major indexes rose about 3 percent.

A better-than-expected profit report from Lowe's Cos., an uptick in homebuilder sentiment and positive comments from analysts about U.S. banks revived investors' confidence in an economic rebound. Stocks fell sharply last week on worries that a recovery might be further off than hoped, interrupting a rally that has left the Standard & Poor's 500 index up 34.5 percent since March 9.

Steep drops in home values have been at the heart of the economy's troubles, slicing into consumers' wealth and saddling banks with huge losses. Analysts believe that stability in the housing and banking industries are imperative for the economy to rebound.

"There's a realization that things are going to get better," said James Cox, managing partner at Harris Financial Group. "That's the main theme of the market over the

last couple of weeks."

Despite Monday's bounce, however, the market is expected to remain volatile as investors look for signs that the economy is actually

recovering — not just slowing its descent.

At the start of the market's upswing in March, signs of stabilization were enough to encourage investors to buy stocks. Linda Duessel, equity market strategist at Federated Investors, said the rally has been driven by "less bad" information.

"Probably, we'll get bored with that as the months progress," Duessel said. "We'll need something better to move the market."

The Dow rose 235.44, or 2.9 percent, to 8,504.08. That was the biggest point gain since a 246-point jump on April 9.

The S&P 500 index rose 26.83,

or 3 percent, to 909.71, putting it back into positive territory for the year. The Nasdaq composite index rose 52.22, or 3.1 percent, to 1,732.36.

Government bond prices fell, pushing the yield on the 10-year Treasury note — a widely used benchmark for home mortgages and other loans — up to 3.24 percent from 3.14 percent late Friday.

Last week, the Dow slid 3.6 percent, the S&P 500 index lost 5 percent and the Nasdaq fell 3.4 percent as a weak retail sales report and an uptick in job losses had investors questioning the merits of a two-month rally off of 12-year lows. But U.S.

and European trading started on strong footing Monday after India's stock market rose an unprecedented 17 percent. Investors viewed the country's election results as paving the way for economic reforms.

U.S. stocks got a boost when Lowe's Cos., the nation's second-largest home improvement chain, posted earnings that easily beat Wall Street's forecasts and raised its full-year profit outlook.

Lowe's closed up \$1.49, or 8.1 percent, at \$19.94.

Buying accelerated later in the day when the National Association of Home Builders said its housing market index rose for the second month in a row in May. The report reflected growing optimism among builders, an encouraging sign that housing activity might be picking up.

Homebuilding stocks soared on the news. Beazer Homes USA Inc. rose 47 cents, or 20 percent, to \$2.81, while Lennar Corp. rose \$1.21, or 13.7 percent, to \$10.02.

Financial stocks also surged after a spate of analysts issued promising outlooks for the troubled banking industry.

Rochdale Securities analyst Richard Bove noted the potential for "explosive earnings growth and unusually strong stock price performance" for banks as the economy recovers. Goldman Sachs raised its rating on Bank of America Corp. to "Buy" on expectations for solid earnings in the second quarter. And BMO Capital Markets upgraded its view of the banking industry, anticipating that profits will start to rebound in coming quarters. Bank of America rose \$1.06, or 9.9 percent, to \$11.73. State Street Corp. was another big gainer after it became the latest bank to turn to the capital markets to raise money. □

American Express says it will eliminate 4,000 jobs

NEW YORK — American Express said Monday it is eliminating about 4,000 jobs as part of a plan to slash another \$800 million in costs for the remainder of the year.

The layoffs represent about 6 percent of the New York-based credit card issuer's current global work force.

Many of the affected workers were notified in recent days and the remainder will be notified in coming weeks, said company spokeswoman Joanna Lambert.

Lambert could not specify how many U.S. workers would be laid off, but said the cuts will be across the board.

The newest plan follows \$1.8 billion in cost cuts — including 7,000 layoffs — announced in October of last year. The company also suspended management-level salary increases and instituted a hiring freeze at the time.

As part of the newest cost-cutting plan, American Express also plans to scale back investment spending and make further cuts to operating costs, including professional services and travel.

"While we have remained solidly profitable at a time when some parts of the card industry were incurring substantial losses, we continue to be very cautious about the economic outlook and are therefore moving

forward with additional reengineering efforts to help further reduce our operating costs," said Kenneth I. Chenault, chairman and chief executive officer in a release.

The 4,000 layoffs will result in a restructuring charge of about \$180 million to \$250 million in the second quarter, American Express said.

The deep cost cutting shows even a company like American Express, which prides itself on catering to a more affluent clientele, is not immune to the pullback in consumer spending.

The company's customers are more heavily concentrated in California and Florida, where the slumping housing market is taking a toll. American Express also has a higher percentage of small-business customers, and small businesses tend to miss payments more than individuals, executives have said.

American Express first announced its plan to embark on the additional cuts last month when it reported its first-quarter results. For the first three months of the year, the company's profit fell 63 percent.

It marked the sixth-straight quarter of profit declines.

Shares of American Express rose \$1.90 to \$26.13 during the regular session, then fell 5 cents during after hours trading. □

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The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, **Texas de Brazil** will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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President Barack Obama meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Monday, May 18, 2009, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

Obama holds candid talks with Israel's PM Netanyahu

STEVEN R. HURST
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama on Monday opened his deepest foray into the Middle East quagmire, telling Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu he must stop Jewish settlements and should grasp the “historic opportunity” to make peace with the Palestinians.

Both leaders are relatively new in their jobs, and they spoke of warm ties and extraordinary progress. Obama’s readiness to speak out on settlements and stalled Israel-Palestinian talks, however, indicated he and Netanyahu had not reached a thorough agreement on the best way forward after an intense two-plus hours of talks.

Continued on Page B4

Mullen: 2 years to turn tide in Afghanistan

ANNE GEARAN

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top U.S. military officer warned Monday that the deaths of Afghan civilians caught up in American combat operations could cripple President Barack Obama’s revamped strategy for the seven-year-old war. “I believe that each time we do that, we put our strategy in jeopardy,” said Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “We cannot succeed ... in Afghanistan by killing Afghan civilians.”

Mullen said additional forces and new tactics

can help the United States turn a discouraging tide in Afghanistan. He said he was hopeful that “in the next 12- to 24 months, that we can stem the trends which have been going very badly in Afghanistan the last three years.”

But speaking at the Brookings Institution, Mullen sounded frustrated that as the first of 21,000 U.S. reinforcements arrive, Taliban insurgents are having a seemingly easy time using American military prowess against them.

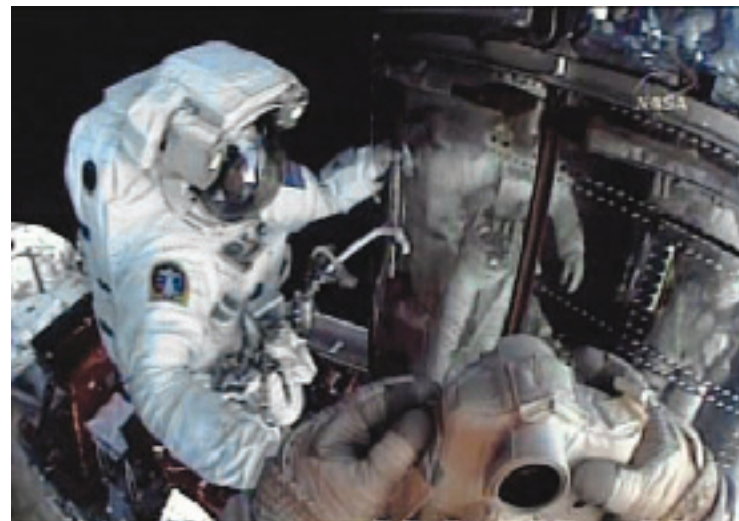
Mullen pointed to this month’s disputed U.S.

airstrikes in Farah province, in which women and children were apparently among dozens of civilians killed. The United States says the Taliban is responsible for at least some of the deaths, but Mullen didn’t spend much time defending U.S. actions.

The May 4-5 incident is still under investigation and Mullen indicated the details may always remain murky. Mullen refused to rule out the use of unmanned drone aircraft, which the United States uses to target insurgent hideouts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Continued on Next Page

Astronauts finish work on Hubble space telescope



In this image from NASA TV astronaut John Grunsfeld holds a camera as he makes a photo of Andrew Feustel while they work to upgrade the Hubble Space Telescope during a spacewalk, Monday, May 18, 2009. This is the fifth and final repair mission for the 19-year-old telescope.

Associated Press

MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Spacewalking astronauts completed repairs to the Hubble Space Telescope on Monday, leaving it more powerful than ever and able to peer even deeper into the cosmos — almost to the brink of creation.

Continued on Page B5



Police officers stand next to the coffin containing the body of slain assistant municipal police chief Abel Salazar during his funeral in Tijuana, Mexico, Monday, May 18, 2009. Salazar was fatally shot Saturday when he was driving to his job at a police substation in Tijuana.

Associated Press

Mexico detains hit gang allegedly run by police

MANUEL DE LA CRUZ

Associated Press Writer

TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (AP) — Police in southern Mexico said Monday they arrested a gang of at least six drug cartel assassins, including two alleged hit women, who were allegedly commanded by top police officers.

Continued on Page B7



Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, May 13, 2009, at a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Defense Department.

Associated Press



MULLEN

Continued from front Page

Witnesses in the latest incident say a drone flew overhead before the U.S. bombs fell.

"We can't tie our troops'

hands behind their backs," Mullen said.

Afghans blame U.S. airstrikes for the deaths and destruction in two villages in the western province. American officials say the Taliban held villagers hostage during the fight.

It is unclear exactly how many people died in the fighting.

The Afghan government has paid out compensation to families for 140 dead, based on a list gathered from villagers.

The U.S. military has said that figure is exaggerated, but it has not provided its own estimate.

If the Afghan toll is correct, it would be the largest case of civilian deaths since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion to oust the Taliban.

"We've got to be very, very focused on making sure that we proceed deliberately, that we know who the

enemy is," Mullen said. "The enemy uses this very effectively against us."

Mullen said it will take as long as two years for the United States to make full use of an extra 21,000 forces now moving into the country. He said he is encouraged that the first units arriving this spring seem to be off to a fast start.

"I would look to 2009 and 2010 to be incredibly important years in Afghanistan," Mullen said. "The violence level is up, the Taliban is much better organized than they were before."

Mullen also refused to rule out the use of unmanned drones, which the United States uses to target insurgent hideouts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"We can't tie our troops' hands behind their backs," Mullen said. □




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Supreme Court: Sept. 11 detainee lawsuit cannot proceed

JESSE J. HOLLAND

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Robert Mueller and former Attorney General John Ashcroft cannot be sued by a former Sept. 11 detainee who claimed he was abused because of his religion and ethnicity, a sharply divided U.S. Supreme Court said Monday in a decision that could make it harder to sue top officials for the actions of low-level operatives.

The court overturned a lower court decision that let Javid Iqbal's lawsuit against the high-ranking officials proceed.

Iqbal is a Pakistani Muslim who spent nearly six months in solitary confinement in New York in 2002. He had argued that while Ashcroft and Mueller did not single him out for mistreatment, they were responsible for a policy of confining detainees in highly restrictive conditions because of their religious beliefs or race. But the government argued that there was nothing linking Mueller and Ashcroft to the abuses that happened to Iqbal at a New York prison's Administrative Maximum Special Housing Unit, and the court agreed.

"The complaint does not show even intimate, that petitioners purposefully housed detainees in the ADMAX SHU due to their race, religion or national origin," said Justice Anthony Kennedy, who wrote the majority opinion. "All it plausibly suggests is that the nation's top law enforcement officers, in the aftermath of a devastating attack, sought to keep suspected terrorists in the most secure conditions available until the suspects could be cleared of terrorist activity."

The New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had said the lawsuit could proceed.

Richard A. Samp, lawyer for the Washington Legal Foundation, welcomed the court's ruling. "It ensures the ability of senior national security officials to perform their duties without the distraction of having to defend against claims for money

damages," he said.

"The decision's effect will be widespread. By enabling all defendants to win dismissal of unsubstantiated claims, it will make it more difficult for plaintiffs to coerce settlements from defendants seeking to avoid the costs of discovery," Samp said.

The court's liberal justices — David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and John Paul Stevens — dissented from the nine-member court's opinion.

"Iqbal contends that Ashcroft and Mueller were at the very least aware of the discriminatory detention policy and condoned it and perhaps even took part in devising it," Souter said. He should be given chance to prove his claims in court, Souter said.

Kennedy said the Sept. 11 attacks were carried out by Arab Muslim hijackers who counted themselves members of al-Qaida.

"It should come as no surprise that a legitimate policy directing law enforcement to arrest and detain individuals because of their suspected link to the attacks would produce a disparate, incidental impact on Arab Muslims, even though the purpose of the policy was to target neither Arabs nor Muslims," he said.

The Supreme Court sent the case back to the lower courts. Iqbal could have a case against others, Kennedy said.

His "account of his prison ordeal could, if proved, demonstrate unconstitutional misconduct by some governmental actors," Kennedy said. "But the allegations and pleadings with respect to these actors are not before us here."

Iqbal was arrested at his suburban home on Nov. 2, 2001, and charged with nonviolent federal crimes unrelated to terrorism. Two months later, he was moved to a holding facility in New York, where he was in solitary confinement for more than 150 days without a hearing, his lawsuit alleges.

He said he was subjected to physical and verbal abuse, including unnecessary strip searches. On the day he

entered solitary confinement, he says, he was thrown against a wall, kicked in the stomach, punched in the face and dragged across a floor by federal prison officers.

He was cleared of any involvement in terrorism and was deported in January 2003 after pleading guilty to fraud and being sentenced to a year and four months in prison.

The appeals court said it recognized the gravity of the situation confronting government investigators after the 2001 terrorist attacks and agreed that some forms of government action that otherwise would not be proper are permitted in emergencies. But it said most of the rights cited in the lawsuit "do



not vary with surrounding circumstances, such as the right not to be subjected to needlessly harsh conditions of confinement, the right to be free from the use of excessive force and the right not to be subjected to ethnic or religious

discrimination."

A 2003 Justice Department report found "significant problems" with the treatment of post-Sept. 11 detainees at the facility in New York, including physical abuse and mistreatment. □

Panetta: Location of all Pakista nukes not known



The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Leon Panetta, delivers a speech at the Pacific Council of International Policy event in Los Angeles on Monday May 18, 2009

Associated Press

MICHAEL R. BLOOD

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — CIA Director Leon Panetta said Monday that the United States does not know the location of all of Pakistan's nuclear weapons but is confident the country has them secure. Panetta spoke days after the top U.S. military officer told Congress there is evidence Pakistan is adding to its nuclear weapons systems and warheads. Pakistan, however,

denies it.

The CIA director was asked about Pakistan's nuclear program at a forum organized by the Pacific Council on International Policy.

"We don't have, frankly, the intelligence to know where they all are located," Panetta said, adding the U.S. is confident the Pakistani government has a "pretty secure approach to try to protect these weapons."

That security is something

the U.S. is watching, he said. "The last thing we want is to have the Taliban have access to nuclear weapons in Pakistan."

At a congressional hearing last week, Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked whether there was evidence that Pakistan was adding to its nuclear arsenal. He replied: "Yes."

Pakistan is battling a growing Islamic insurgency with links to al-Qaida and the Taliban, and Washington is considering giving the government billions of dollars in aid to fight it.

Mullen said in Washington on Monday that the U.S. has focused some aid in recent years on improving the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, and the country has used it for that purpose. Pakistan is thought to possess more than 60 nuclear weapons under a program that began when its rival, India, started producing them. □

Treasury Secretary: No plans to cap executive pay



Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner participates in a question and answer session with Newsweek editor Jon Meacham, not pictured, on the topic of "Recession and Recovery: The Road Ahead," Monday, May 18, 2009, in Washington.

Associated Press

JIM KUHNHENN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Financial sector executives should not fear U.S. government imposed caps on their salaries even as the Obama administration moves to influence how firms pay

OBAMA - NETANYAHU

Continued from Front Page

Obama also notified Iran it had until year's end to get serious about talks with the world community on curbing Tehran's nuclear ambitions: "We're not going to have talks forever," the president said of his diplomatic opening to the Islamic Republic.

The former Bush administration diplomatically bludgeoned Iran over its perceived nuclear weapons ambitions but refused to engage the Islamic government in Tehran. Obama, deeply concerned that a nuclear-armed Iran could spark an arms race in the Middle East and deepen the threat to Israeli security, has changed the U.S. course and seeks to engage the Iranians in direct talks.

Iran insists its nuclear program is intended solely for civilian electricity generation.

So far Iran has offered no positive response. Obama said he assumed the country's leadership was distracted with its continuing presidential election campaign but said he thought he would be able to gauge Iranian seriousness in the coming months.

"We should have a fairly

their employees.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said Monday that government should place "broad constraints" on the incentives that huge pay packages create for executives to take short-term risks. But he drew the line at government

good sense by the end of the year as to whether they are moving in the right direction and whether the parties involved are making progress and that there's a good-faith effort to resolve differences," the president said Monday. With Netanyahu at his side, Obama said he had told the new Israeli leader during the extended Oval Office meeting that Israel must move quickly to resume peace talks with the Palestinians and insisted negotiations start from a previous agreement on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We have seen progress stalled on this front, and I suggested to the prime minister that he has a historic opportunity to get a serious movement on this issue during his tenure," Obama said. "That means that all the parties involved have to take seriously obligations that they have previously agreed to."

Obama pointedly told reporters that serious negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians would be possible only if Netanyahu would order an end to the expansion of Jewish

determining levels of pay.

"I don't think our government should set caps on compensation," Geithner said Monday during an interview at an invitation-only luncheon hosted by Newsweek.

He said government's goal should be to minimize excessive risk-taking by financial firms — the kind of gambles that helped precipitate the current financial crisis.

"You had a crisis magnified by the fact that people were paid to take huge amounts of short term risk," he said. "That's something that is preventable."

Geithner said government standards could require that incentive pay be tied to long-term performance. He said such standards could combine with compensation disclosure requirements and giving shareholders the ability to vote on salary packages — a practice known as "say on

settlements in the West Bank, land that would make up the Palestinian state along with the Gaza Strip.

"There is a clear understanding that we have to make progress on settlements; that settlements have to be stopped in order for us to move forward," Obama said, referring to past negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Netanyahu said he was ready to resume peace talks with the Palestinians immediately but said any agreement depended on their acceptance of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. It was not immediately clear in the way he phrased the response whether Netanyahu was demanding that as a precondition for talks.

"There's never been a time when Arabs and Israelis see a common threat the way we see it today," Netanyahu said, speaking of a sense of urgency felt throughout the Arab world about Persian Iran's nuclear program.

The Israeli leader did not respond publicly to Obama's demand for an end to the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and refused again to say he was ready to negotiate a so-called two-state solution to

pay."

Wall Street bonuses and retention packages have provoked anger among the public and in Congress. Lawmakers have moved to limit pay for top employees at financial institutions that have received federal government assistance. The standards Geithner envisioned would apply to all financial institutions.

Geithner also said the U.S. economy is stabilizing but unemployment would continue to rise. He pointed to positive signs in the economy, including improvements in credit markets. But he called the recession the most challenging economic crisis the nation has seen in generations.

"We're not going to have a steady, even process of repair," he said. "It's going to be bumpy and still feel fragile for a while. It's not going to feel better for a long time for

millions of Americans."

On other topics:

—The deficit: "We have to wait until we see recovery firmly established before we start to withdraw this extraordinary stimulus that we put in place." He called reducing the deficit, "one of the defining economic challenges, political challenges of the next five years."

—His short-handed staff at Treasury: "We're doing quite well in terms of speed and quality of policy.... Things that normally takes years, we're doing very, very quickly." He said he hoped to be staffed at the levels he needs by the beginning of August.

—Financial regulation: Geithner said the administration, "in the next few weeks," plans to announce a comprehensive set of proposals for overhauling oversight of the financial sector. □



Demonstrator gather outside the White House in Washington, Monday, May 18, 2009, as President Barack Obama met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Associated Press

the six-decade dispute with the Palestinians.

The plan, endorsed by the United States and other parties pushing for peace between the historic foes, calls for establishment of a Palestinian state side by side with Israel.

Palestinians offered praise for Obama but expressed disappointment with Netanyahu's remarks.

Netanyahu "did not mention a commitment to a two-state solution, and we need to see American action against this policy," said Nail Abu Redden, an aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who visits the White House

on June 28.

Saeb Erekat, the top Palestinian negotiator, issued a similar assessment:

"Mr. Netanyahu failed to mention the two-state solution, signed agreements and the commitment to stop settlement activity.

He said he wants the Palestinians to govern themselves. The question to Mr. Netanyahu is, 'How can I govern myself while your occupation continues everywhere in the West Bank and Gaza? And how can I govern myself under your wall, roadblocks and settlement activities?'" □

Sheriff: Eighth-grader planned school shooting

MARY FOSTER

Associated Press Writer

LAROSE, Louisiana (AP) — A Louisiana middle school student who stormed into a classroom Monday and fired a gunshot over a teacher's head, then shot himself in a bathroom had detailed plans for a rampage in a journal and suicide note, authorities said. The 15-year-old student, whose

name was not released, fired once around 9 a.m. local time inside a classroom at Larose-Cut Off Middle School, then shot himself in the head, said Lafourche Parish Sheriff Craig Webre. He was in critical but stable condition. The teacher had never taught the teen.

Webre said investigators found a note describing the boy's plans to "gear up" before his

spree, along with a drawing of how he'd dress. Although he apparently was intent on killing people, he was armed with only four bullets for the .25-caliber, semiautomatic pistol he had taken from his father's home during the weekend. The boy's mother noticed he seemed nervous before school, but he said he was just worried about seeing

HUBBLE

Continued from Page B1

The last humans to lay hands on Hubble outfitted the observatory with another set of fresh batteries, a new sensor for precise pointing and protective covers. That equipment, along with other improvements made over the last five days, should allow the telescope to provide dazzling views of the universe for another five to 10 years.

"Hubble is returned to flagship status, and it now has a full arsenal of instruments," said Jon Morse, NASA's director of astrophysics.

It was the fifth and final spacewalk for the shuttle Atlantis crew, and the final visit by astronauts ever to Hubble.

As the spacewalk drew to a close, Hubble's chief mechanic, John Grunsfeld, accidentally bumped one of the telescope's antennas and knocked off its cap with his backpack.

"Oh, I feel terrible," he groaned.

Mission Control quickly assured the astronauts the antenna was fine.

"Sorry, Mr. Hubble, have a good voyage," Grunsfeld said after he covered up the tip.

"Consider it a goodbye kiss, John," one of his crewmates said. The astronauts planned to set Hubble free Tuesday.

During this emotional last house call, astronauts gave



In this Sunday, May 17, 2009 photo released by NASA, astronaut Michael Good, positioned on a foot restraint on the end of Atlantis' remote manipulator system, participates in the mission's fourth session of extravehicular activity as work continues to refurbish and upgrade the Hubble Space Telescope.

Associated Press

Hubble two state-of-the-art science instruments and fixed two others.

The \$220 million worth of new instruments should allow the telescope to gaze farther back into time — within 500 million or 600 million years of the first moments of the universe.

Prior to the repairs, Hubble was able to look back to within 800 million years.

"This is a very important moment in human history," said Hubble senior project scientist David Leckrone. "We will rewrite the textbooks at least one more time."

Hubble program manager Preston Burch acknowledged that the telescope still has some original parts, but noted "in many ways it is a brand-

new observatory and far, far more capable than the Hubble of 1990."

Mission Control congratulated the astronauts for successfully completing "electronic brain surgery" Monday during a spacewalk that lasted more than seven hours.

In addition to the batteries and the sensor, Grunsfeld and Andrew Feustel installed steel foil sheets to protect against radiation and the extreme temperature changes of space. It was messy work. Pieces of the old insulation broke off and floated harmlessly away.

"I was hoping to retrieve those for memories," said Grunsfeld, an astrophysicist who has spent more time working on the orbiting Hubble than anyone. □



Police and emergency officials arrive at Larose-Cut Off Middle School in Larose, La., Monday, May 18, 2009. Authorities say a student shot himself in the head at the middle school after he fired at a teacher and missed.

Associated Press

his standardized test results, which were released Monday, Webre said.

About 500 sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders attend the school in a rural community of about 7,000 people, some 45 miles southwest of New Orleans. Webre said the boy had no disciplinary problems at school and hadn't been in trouble with the law. The teen had no reason to be in the classroom, he said.

He was a year or two older than most of his classmates who described him as a quiet boy who never talked about guns or violence.

Webre said investigators found inside the boy's bookbag a completely filled journal and

two loose sheets of paper that appeared to be a plan for the shooting and a suicide note. The school has both standing and handheld metal detectors, but they aren't used all the time and weren't in use Monday.

Webre said the boy arrived at the school in uniform — white shirt, khaki pants — but changed into camouflage pants shown in his drawing. In an expletive-laced note, he wrote, "First, I will tell my art class teacher that I had to go to the bathroom. Then I would go to the last stall and 'gear up.'"

The school was scheduled to reopen Tuesday with enhanced security and several counselors on hand. □

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Darfur rebel leader at war crimes tribunal

SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press Writer

CAIRO (AP) — The first Darfur suspect to appear before an international court was once a prominent leader in the war-torn region's most powerful rebel group who broke away to form his own faction.

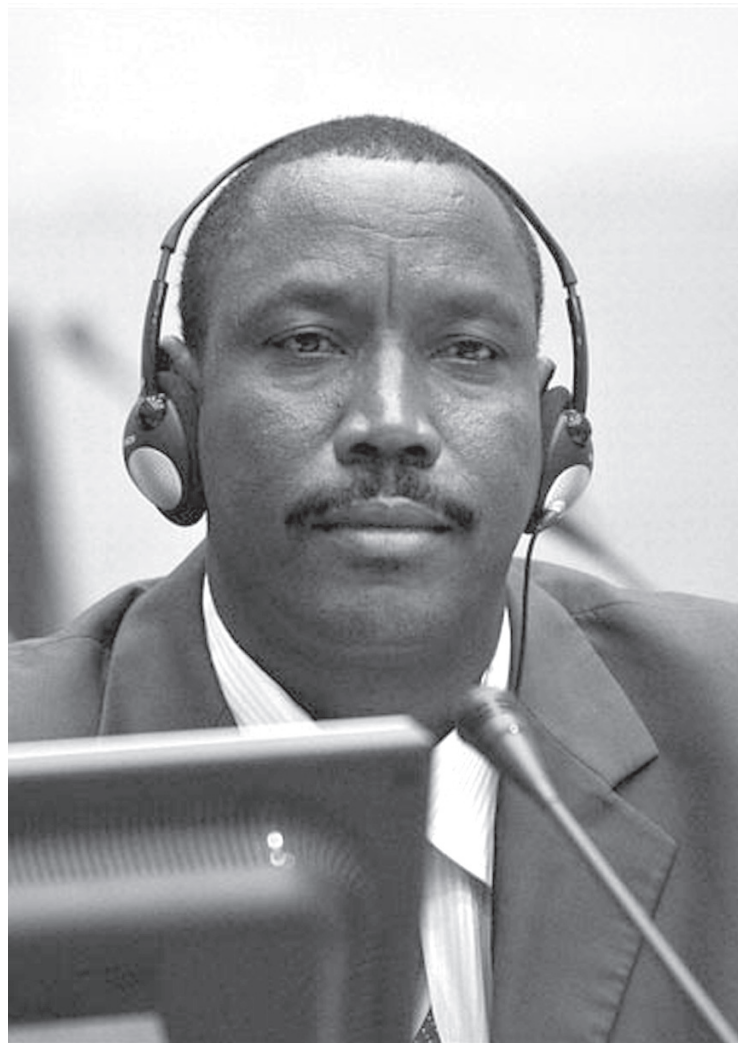
Bahr Idriss Abu Garda voluntarily handed himself over to the Hague-based International Criminal Court, where he faces charges of murder and pillaging in a 2007 attack against peacekeepers in Darfur.

The court has indicted two other rebel figures. It has also issued an order for the arrest of the rebels' opponent,

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, on charges of genocide and war crimes in the Darfur war, in which up to 300,000 people have been killed since 2003. Al-Bashir has refused to cooperate with the court.

Abu Garda, a native of Darfur from the prominent Zaghawa tribe, was once a merchant who headed the Chad offices of the government-run Sudanese Gum Arabic company. He was among many young black Darfuris who once backed the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Khartoum but soon became disillusioned with it, accusing it of discrimination against Darfur's ethnic African population.

He became an early member



Sudanese rebel leader Bahar Idriss Abu Garda appears at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, Monday, May 18, 2009. Abu Garda, 46, turned himself in voluntarily and is the first suspect from the Sudan conflict to come before the court. Judge Cuno Tarfusser informed him of the charges against him, which include murder, pillaging and attacking peacekeepers in an attack that killed 12 peacekeepers in Sept. 2007. Abu Garda answered "yes" when asked whether he understood the charges and his rights.

Associated Press

of the Islamist-leaning Justice and Equality Movement, whose leader, Khalil Ibrahim, was once a government official in the northern-led regime. Abu Garda rose in the ranks of

JEM to become its secretary general. But in 2007, he fell out with the group. Suleiman Jamous, a JEM member, said Abu Garda didn't take criticism well from the group's leaders.

Abu Garda formed his own breakaway JEM faction, called the collective leadership. But the fall from grace with JEM has cost Abu Garda prestige and foot soldiers, since most fighters chose to stay with JEM, the region's most powerful rebel force.

According to Jamous, the split took place shortly before the attack against a peacekeepers base in the northern Darfur town of Haskanita, in which Abu Garda is accused. That was one of the deadliest attacks ever against peacekeepers in Darfur: 12 peacekeepers were killed, eight were severely wounded and the rebels looted weapons, equipment and money from the base.

Last year, Abu Garda formed another rebel group, known as the United Resistance Front, which includes Darfur Arabs opposed to Khartoum.

Jamous and JEM field commander Suleiman Sandal say Abu Garda's group has no presence on the ground in Darfur and has little sway on the conflict.

"He has no other option" but to surrender, Sandal said from Darfur. □

Swine flu search at Dominican resorts

RAMON ALMANZAR

Associated Press Writer

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Health authorities fanned out Monday across white sand beaches in the eastern Dominican Republic, searching for possible swine flu in a resort area that initially benefited from fears about the virus.

No cases have been confirmed in the Dominican Republic. But health workers in the Caribbean country are concerned about the potential for transmission after three Chilean women were diagnosed with the new flu strain upon returning home from Punta Cana, Health Secretary Bautista Rojas said.

The travelers have been hospitalized and isolated in Chile, that country's health ministry said.

They flew home Saturday aboard a Copa Airlines flight that also stopped in Panama. Rojas told reporters late Monday that doctors examined some 200 people, including the Chileans' driver, but there was no sign of the

H1N1 virus that has sickened more than 8,000 people around the world and killed 76.

"We have taken a great amount of samples, but we have not had any positives," Rojas said. Punta Cana, on the eastern tip of the Caribbean island, draws nearly 1.9 million people a year to its resorts.

Dominican resorts benefited from the early stages of the outbreak, receiving at least 11 U.S. and European tour group flights originally bound for Mexico, whose tourism industry was devastated by reports of swine flu there.

Six epidemiologists have been dispatched to the Punta Cana area and messages have been posted in languages including French, German, Russian and Mandarin Chinese advising visitors to contact health authorities if they exhibit symptoms, the newspaper Listin Diario reported Monday.

The area's resorts are kept carefully separated from nearby impoverished towns in the nation of 9.7 million, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. □



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R	MY BLOODY VALENTINE	
	daily: 8:00	
	matinee: 10:10	late show: 12:00
PG-13	OBSESSED	
	daily: 5:25 7:45 10:05	
	matinee: 12:45 3:05 late show: 12:25	
PG-13	STAR TREK XI	
	daily: 7:00 9:30	
	matinee: 1:40 4:20 late show: 12:10	
PG-13	GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST	
	daily: 4:50	
	matinee: 12:10 2:25 late show:	
PG-13	STATE OF PLAY	NEW
	daily: 7:15 9:45	
	matinee: late show: 12:15	
PG-13	X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE	
	daily: 5:15 7:30 9:50	
	matinee: 12:30 2:55 late show: 12:20	
PG-13	ANGELS & DEMONS	NEW
	daily: 6:10 9:00	
	matinee: 12:20 3:15 late show: 11:50	

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG-13	OBSESSED	
	daily: 5:30 7:45 10:00	
	matinee: 12:50 3:10 late show: 12:20	
PG-13	STAR TREK XI	
	daily: 4:00 6:40 9:15	
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PG-13	GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST	
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PG-13	X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE	
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	matinee: 12:30 2:50 late show: 12:10	
PG	MONSTERS VS ALIENS	
	daily: 4:50	
	matinee: 12:35 2:40 late show:	
PG-13	STATE OF PLAY	NEW
	daily: 7:00 9:30	
	matinee: late show: 12:00	
PG-13	ANGELS & DEMONS	NEW
	daily: 5:40 8:30	
	matinee: 12:00 2:50 late show: 11:20	

Matinee: sat & sun | Late show: fri & sat

MEXICO GANG

Continued from Page B1

The police chief, two commanders and a former public safety director in the city of Tapachula, near the Guatemala border, were also detained on suspicion of leading the hit gang.

They suspects allegedly worked for the Zetas, a gang of enforcers linked to the Gulf cartel. Police and soldiers seized dozens of grenades and assault rifles during the weekend raid in which the alleged assassins were captured, state prosecutors said.

The arrests came as drug corruption scandals blossomed across Mexico — in states far from the U.S. border region, where the drug battles have long been concentrated.

In Morelos, just outside Mexico City, prosecutors announced that the top state security official and the police chief in the state capital, Cuernavaca, were ordered held for 40 days on suspicion of aiding the Beltran Leyva cartel. Two other people were also ordered held in the case. Meanwhile a prominent senator from Zacatecas state called a news conference to deny any knowledge of a large load of marijuana found earlier this year at a warehouse belonging to his brother.

On Jan. 22, army troops acting on a tip raided the brother's chile-drying warehouse and found people loading marijuana onto trucks. More than 11.4 tons of the drug were seized at the plant, near the city of Fresnillo.

“My brother said the (locks) had been broken, and he reported it to police,” Sen. Ricardo Monreal told reporters Monday in Mexico City. The brother, Candido Monreal, has not been charged in the case.

The senator accused the Zacatecas government of being completely infiltrated by traffickers, and said he has resigned from the leftist Democratic Revolution Party,

which governs the state, to protest what he called a smear campaign against him. Government officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Zacatecas is the same state where armed men staged a bold raid on a prison over

the weekend that freed 53 suspects, dozens of them linked to the Gulf cartel. Gov. Amalia Garcia said Saturday that prison guards were likely complicit.

Also Monday, police in the southern state of Guerrero found the severed heads of

three men in an ice chest left on the side of a highway near the resort of Zihuatanejo. The cooler was wrapped in tape and a message was attached, but police did not reveal what it said.

The men's decapitated bodies were found about a mile away

in an abandoned taxi, the state Public Safety department said. Some of the bodies had their hands bound behind their backs and showed signs of torture.

More than 10,750 people have been killed in drug violence during the last 2 1/2 years. □

Soul beach

MUSIC FESTIVAL

NO CAMERAS ALLOWED

Friday, May 22, 2009 MUSIC CONCERT

Adjacent Havana Beach Club • 7p-11p

Wayne Brady Estelle Aruba Band SMS Competition Winner

Saturday, May 23, 2009 MUSIC CONCERT

Adjacent Havana Beach Club • 7p-11p

Jamie Foxx Etana

Sunday, May 24, 2009 MUSIC CONCERT

Adjacent Havana Beach Club • 7p-11p

Robin Thicke Common BlackPlanet.com Soul Beach Music Search Winner

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Soul Beach Amphitheater Box Office - 1 hour before showtime

Ticket Costs

(service charges may apply):

3 Night Concert Ticket Package: \$180 (USD)
Single Concert Ticket: \$65 (USD)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, May 20

Opening Party - Welcoming Celebration 10p-3a, Mr. Jazz by Chucho Valdes
Paseo Herencia, L.G. Smith Blvd 382-A 2nd Floor, Palm Beach

Thursday, May 21

Live Radio Remote Broadcasts

KJLH – The Guy Black Show 9a-1p, Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa, J.E. Irausquin Blvd No.81, Palm Beach
WHUR – The Mid Day with Triscina Grey 10a-3p, MooMba Beach, J E Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
The Doug & DeDe Show 3-7p– Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino L.G. Smith Boulevard 82, Oranjestad
Soul Beach Daytime Event 10a – 3p, Aruba SMS Competition Showdown MooMba Beach Bar & Restaurant, J E Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
Soul Beach Happy Hour 5-7p, The Village at Palm Beach, Chino Latino Adjacent - J.E. Irausquin Blvd.
Nightclub Party 10p-2a, Hard Rock Cafe Aruba, (Also has NBA Playoff screenings), South Beach Building Loc. 33, Palm Beach

Friday, May 22

Live Radio Remote Broadcasts

KJLH – The Guy Black Show 9a-1p, Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa, J.E. Irausquin Blvd No.81, Palm Beach
WHUR – The Mid Day with Triscina Grey 10a-3p, MooMba Beach, J E Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
The Doug & DeDe Show – Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino 3-7p L.G. Smith Boulevard 82, Oranjestad
Jamie Foxx Sirius Radio – Radisson 5-7p, Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa, J.E. Irausquin Blvd No.81, Palm Beach
Soul Beach Daytime Event 10a – 3p, Aruba Band SMS Competition Showdown, MooMba Beach Bar & Restaurant, J E Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
Main Stage Music Concert 7p-11p
Soul Beach Amphitheater, Adjacent to Havana Beach Club, Oranjestad, Featuring: Aruba Band SMS Competition Winner, Estelle • Wayne Brady
Nightclub Parties 11p– 4a, Havana Beach Club, L.G. Smith Blvd 1, Oranjestad

Saturday, May 23

Motorcraft Beach Party Event 10a-3p, MooMba Beach Bar & Restaurant, J.E. Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
Main Stage Music Concert 7p-11p
Soul Beach Amphitheater, Adjacent to Havana Beach Club, Oranjestad Featuring: Hildward Croes • Etana • Jamie Foxx
Nightclub Parties 11p– 4a, Havana Beach Club, L.G. Smith Blvd 1, Oranjestad

Sunday, May 24

Black Planet Beach Party 10a-3p, MooMba Beach Bar & Restaurant J E Irausquin Blvd 230, Palm Beach
Main Stage Concert 7p – 11p
Soul Beach Amphitheater, Adjacent to Havana Beach Club, Oranjestad, Featuring: Soul Beach Music Search Winner - Abby Dobson • Common • Robin Thicke
Nightclub Parties 11p – 4a, Havana Beach Club, L.G. Smith Blvd 1, Oranjestad

Monday, May 25

Soul Beach Cool Down Party 10p-3a, Mr. Jazz by Chucho Valdes, Paseo Herencia, L.G. Smith Blvd 382-A 2nd Floor, Palm Beach



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Sri Lanka says civil war over, rebel leader killed

RAVI NESSMAN

Associated Press Writer

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)

— Following more than a quarter-century of civil war, Sri Lanka faces the daunting task of trying to reconcile and rebuild after its troops routed the last Tamil Tiger separatist rebels and killed their feared leader.

One of the world's most sophisticated insurgencies, the Tamil Tigers and their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, were brought down Monday by a string of fatal misjudgments and an unrelenting government onslaught aimed at crushing the rebellion at all costs.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who planned to officially declare victory Tuesday in a speech to parliament, has promised a power-sharing deal with the Tamil minority. But the end of the war, which killed more than 70,000 people and displaced 265,000 others, could complicate efforts to forge a lasting peace.

The destruction of the rebels' conventional forces does not mean the threat is over. Insurgents hiding in the jungles of the east have emerged periodically to attack government forces and civilians, and the rebels had sleeper cells planted in Colombo and other towns.

The Tamil Tigers also retain a vast international smuggling network and the financial support of some of the 800,000 Tamil expatriates. At least one top rebel leader, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the reputed smuggling mastermind, remains at large.

"Now (there) is a historic opportunity, and hopefully things will change. But the demonstrable record so far is not particularly encouraging," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, a political analyst and executive director of the Colombo-based Center for Policy Alternatives.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the U.S. is "relieved that the immense loss of life and killing of innocent civilians appears to be over," and he urged Sri Lanka to build a tolerant society and help those hurt by



In this image made available by the Sri Lankan army, a group of Sri Lankan soldiers pose for photographs in Mullivaikkal, Sri Lanka, Monday, May 18, 2009. Sri Lanka declared Monday it had crushed the Tamil Tiger rebels, killing their chief, Velupillai Prabhakaran, and ending his three-decade quest for an independent homeland for minority Tamils.

the fighting.

While Velupillai Prabhakaran was a hero to some, his group was branded a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union. It was accused of waging hundreds of suicide attacks, including the 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and forcibly recruiting child soldiers.

In recent months, government forces ousted the rebels from their stronghold in the north and cornered the retreating fighters in a tiny strip along the northeast coast.

On Monday morning, the troops closed in, the military said.

Prabhakaran and his deputies drove an armor-plated van accompanied by a bus filled with rebel fighters toward the tightening cordon, sparking a two-hour firefight, two military officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Troops eventually fired a rocket at the van, ending the battle, and pulled out Prabhakaran's body as well as those of Soosai, his naval commander, and Pottu Amman, his feared intelligence chief, the officials said. Prabhakaran's son, Charles Anthony, was also killed, along with 250 rebel fighters, the military said.

State television broke into its regular programming to announce Prabhakaran's death, and Rajapaksa confirmed the news in a phone call to India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Indian foreign affairs spokesman Vishnu Prakash said.

"We can announce very responsibly that we have liberated the whole country from terrorism," army chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka said. Fonseka and the commanders of the other security forces formally informed Rajapaksa in a televised ceremony Monday evening.

They were then promptly promoted.

The chubby Prabhakaran turned what was little more than a street gang in the late 1970s into one of the world's most feared insurgencies, fighting for an independence for minority Tamils after years of marginalization at the hands of the Sinhalese majority.

He demanded unwavering loyalty, gave his followers vials of cyanide to bite in case of capture, and created a suicide squad known as the Black Tigers.

Full-fledged war broke out in 1983 after the rebels killed 13 soldiers in an ambush, sparking anti-Tamil riots that human rights groups say killed as many as 2,000 people.

At the height of his power, Prabhakaran controlled a

virtual country in the north that had its own border control, police force, tax system and law school. He commanded a rebel army of thousands backed by artillery, a navy and a nascent air force.

Prabhakaran was renowned as a master strategist, but made a series of fatal miscalculations that eventually proved his downfall. The assassination of Gandhi alienated his supporters in India, where millions of Tamils live. His stubborn line during negotiations convinced the government it could never reach a peace deal, and a Tamil boycott he enforced in the 2005 election ensured victory for the hard-line Rajapaksa, who later vowed to destroy the rebels.

The Tamil Tigers were also badly weakened when their top commander in the east defected along with thousands of fighters.

The divergent reactions to the rebel defeat highlighted the challenge Sri Lanka faces in healing its scars. State TV played Sinhalese nationalist songs and many Sinhalese poured into the streets in celebration.

On the beaches surrounding the southern port city of Galle, overjoyed Sri Lankans ignited chains of firecrackers. Groups of motorbike riders raced through the city streets, waving flags. As night fell on the nearby beach town of

Unawatuna, a group of 30 children paraded near the beach, banging homemade drums and singing.

"We are happy today to see the end of that ruthless terrorist organization and its heartless leader. We can live in peace after this," said Lal Hettige, 47, a Sinhalese businessman. But Tamils feared the government would not be magnanimous in victory.

"The general triumphalist mood is only an indication that Tamils may never get their due place," said S. Prasanna, a sales representative.

Many other Tamils refused to speak on the record after what they said was years of police raids, harassment, arbitrary detentions and even abductions.

"I believe the arrests and detentions will only increase from now on," a 34-year-old Tamil businessman said. "The government will be suspicious with everybody, thinking the Tigers may have come out and mingled with the civilians."

Though Rajapaksa promised political compromise, the defeat of the rebels leaves a vacuum in the Tamil leadership.

Prabhakaran killed many community leaders seen as a challenge to his authority. Others moved abroad, while many of those who remained active in politics either allied themselves with the government or were linked to the rebels and effectively sidelined.

The bloody end to the war could also complicate peace efforts.

Diplomats had appealed for a humanitarian truce to safeguard civilians trapped in the war zone, but the government refused.

The battle killed at least 7,000 Tamil civilians and wounded 16,000 between January and May 7, according to the United Nations. Health officials said more than 1,000 others were killed in heavy shelling in the last week of fighting.

EU foreign ministers called Monday for an independent war crimes investigation into the deaths, declaring: "Those accountable must be brought to justice." □

Iran leader: Don't vote for pro-Western candidates

ALI AKBAR DAREINI
Associated Press Writer

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's supreme leader urged the public Monday not to vote for pro-Western candidates in the June 12 presidential election, though he gave no clear indication of whether he is supporting hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The critical election pits Ahmadinejad against reformist challengers at a time when the United States — under the Obama administration — is pursuing dialogue with its longtime adversary after years of shunning Iran.

The reformists seek an easing of social and political restrictions at home and better ties with the West. They see a strong opportunity to unseat Ahmadinejad, who has become increasingly unpopular because of Iran's economic woes. Critics also say he has needlessly enflamed world anger with his statements casting doubt on the Holocaust and calling U.N. resolutions "worthless papers."

Challenging his re-election bid are a conservative former Revolutionary Guards commander and two reformist candidates who have attacked him over his handling of the economy and for pursuing a hard-line foreign policy that they say has plunged Iran deeper into international isolation.

"Do not allow those who would throw their hands up and surrender to enemies and defame the Iranian nation's prestige to get into office," Khamenei said in a televised speech in Bijar, in western Iran.

"(Don't vote for) those who would provoke the greed of the enemies of the Iranian nation and be used by them to create divisions within the nation and take people away from their religion, principles and their revolutionary values."

It was not clear whether he was targeting a specific candidate, though Khamenei has in the past denounced reformists, saying they speak the language of the West. In 2000, Khamenei called reformist newspapers "bases

of the enemy." Within days, more than a dozen reformist papers were closed down.

Hard-liners have also denounced the reformist government of former President Mohammad Khatami, in office from 1997 to 2005, saying he caved in to Western pressure over Iran's nuclear activity and suspended uranium enrichment. They hail Ahmadinejad, saying he defied the West and resumed uranium enrichment, a process that can be used to make fuel for both nuclear energy or nuclear weapons.

Obama has been seeking to engage Iran in direct dialogue and restart international negotiations over its nuclear program, which years of sanctions and isolation have failed to stop. The U.S. and its European allies fear Iran's nuclear activity is aimed at developing weapons under the cover of a civilian energy program, though Iran denies that.

Khamenei holds ultimate power in Iran, at the top of the clerical hierarchy above elected figures. His support is crucial for any candidate to win the vote, though he has never made his choice public. While he has offered glowing praise of Ahmadinejad in the past, he has at times rebuked him publicly. Last August, Khamenei offered glowing praise of Ahmadinejad for "standing up" to the West on the nuclear issue and urged him to run his government as if he would eventually serve a second term.

But earlier this month, Khamenei publicly rebuked the president for his removal of a top official, a rare show of discontent with Ahmadinejad. Last week, Khamenei said people should vote for candidates who "understand the pain of the people ... be intimate with the people, live in a simple and modest way and get away from corruption and aristocracy."

Ahmadinejad supporters hailed those comments as proof that Khamenei supports Ahmadinejad, a populist who grew up in a poor family and presents himself as a man of the people who prefers a



Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivers a speech in a public gathering in the city of Bijar, during his tour to the Kurdistan province, in western Iran, Monday, May 18, 2009. Iran's supreme leader urged the public Monday not to vote for pro-Western candidates in the June 12 presidential election, though he gave no clear indication of whether he is supporting hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Associated Press

simple way of life and dress. Hamid Reza Taraqi, leader of a hard-line political party called the Islamic Coalition Society that is supporting Ahmadinejad in the election, said the supreme leader's latest remarks were aimed at the two reformist candidates.

"It was reformists who used to give in to Western pressure and surrender to the West under former reformist President Khatami. It was also reformists who were supported by the West," Taraqi said.

One of the reformist candidates, former parliament speaker Mahdi Karroubi, has promised to reverse Ahmadinejad's policies and has said he wouldn't mind meeting President Barack Obama if it would help Iran's national interest.

The other reformist challenger, former Prime Minister

Mir Hossein Mousavi, has and the freedom necessary to billed himself as capable of liberalize Iran's economy and straddling Islamic values politics. □

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Sharapova wins comeback match in Poland

RYAN LUCAS

Associated Press Writer

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Maria Sharapova played her first tour singles match in nearly 10 months Monday, and needed nine match points to finish off Tathiana Garbin of Italy 6-1, 6-7 (6), 6-3 in the first round of the Warsaw Open.

“I certainly had desire to win my first match back,” the Russian said. “I’m hungry, I haven’t played for a while and I want it really bad and sometimes I actually have to stop myself at times and tell myself to be patient.”

Sharapova, who last played a singles match in August after being sidelined with a torn rotator cuff in her right shoulder, wore a bandage on the arm but said the shoulder didn’t bother her.

She cruised through the first set and grabbed a quick 4-0 lead in the second before her serve started to falter. Serving at 5-3, she wasted four match points — double faulting on two of them — and then failed to convert two more in the tie-break before netting



Russia’s Maria Sharapova serves the ball to Italy’s Tathiana Garbin during the first round of the WTA Warsaw Open tournament in Warsaw, Poland, Monday, May 18, 2009.

a forehand to give the set to Garbin.

“I created some good opportunities, and played really well in the first set and at the start of the second, but I was definitely a little bit nervous closing that second

set out,” Sharapova said.

In the third, the Russian dropped an early break before rallying with her trademark groundstrokes to overpower the Italian. Sharapova held serve to go up 5-3, then converted her third match

point when Garbin knocked a backhand long.

“When you haven’t been there, haven’t done that in a while it throws you off a little bit, and then there you are after nine months and you have an opportunity to win your first match back, and you start thinking of everything that’s gone on and you kind of lose the present time,” Sharapova said.

Once ranked No. 1 in the world, Sharapova’s ranking has slid to No. 126 since her injury forced her to miss the last two Grand Slams.

“Although these nine months have been pretty difficult, I’ve definitely had to test out my patience,” Sharapova said.

“In these nine months the only thing I’ve accomplished is probably a good pasta carbonara,” she added. “At the end of the day that’s not my specialty, my specialty is to go out and compete and win Grand Slams.”

Sharapova refused to speculate about next week’s French Open, saying she was only thinking about Warsaw this week. □

Galaxy extends unbeaten run to 7

CARSON, California (AP)

— Eddie Lewis scored his first goal of the season in second-half stoppage time to help the Los Angeles Galaxy salvage a 1-1 draw with the Columbus Crew on Sunday.

The Galaxy (1-7-1) extended their unbeaten streak to seven games — their longest stretch without a loss in two years.

Guillermo Barros Schelotto scored his fifth goal of the season for the Crew (1-6-2), who extended their unbeaten run to five games but have yet to win on the road.

Lewis scored after Omar Gonzalez’s long throw-in reached the penalty area. The Crew’s Gino Padula headed the ball away, but Lewis gained possession and fired a low 25-yard drive inside the right post. The Crew played the end of the match with 10 men after Danny O’Rourke received his second yellow card for tripping Landon Donovan from behind in the 89th minute.

Schelotto had given the Crew the lead in the 70th minute, when he took the ball from Galaxy defender Tony Sanneh and sent an 18-yard shot inside the left post. □

NFL, MLB, NBA support NHL in Coyotes fight

BOB BAUM

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The NFL, Major League Baseball and the NBA have lined up in support of the NHL’s court fight to block the sale of the Phoenix Coyotes and move to southern Canada.

The other major sports leagues, including the office of baseball commissioner Bud Selig, filed statements in U.S. Bankruptcy Court on Monday in support of the NHL.

All three statements ask the U.S. Bankruptcy Court to “respect the National Hockey League’s rules and procedures regarding ownership transfer and relocation.”

The statements of baseball and the NBA ask that the court “not set precedent that could severely disrupt the business of professional hockey,” baseball, basketball and other major league sports.

The NFL statement had similar wording, asking the court to avoid a “precedent that has the potential to undermine or disrupt the business of professional hockey, football or other major league sports.”

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman added his voice to the flood of court documents in the league’s battle with Coyotes owner Jerry Moyes and the attempt to sell the franchise and move it to southern Ontario.

Bettman filed a declaration on Monday stating that he has had control of the franchise since November and that Moyes was not authorized to take the team into Chapter 11 bankruptcy earlier this month.

The league also says Moyes had been stripped of authority to negotiate sale of the team.

A hearing is scheduled for Tuesday before Judge Redfield Baum in U.S. Bankruptcy Court on the NHL’s motion to have the case thrown out.

Moyes’ bankruptcy filing on May 5, which took the league by surprise, includes a plan to sell the team for \$212.5 million to Jim Balsillie, who heads the company that makes the Blackberry, contingent on moving the franchise to Hamilton, Ontario.

In court documents, the NHL says the Moyes group knew Bettman had taken control of the club but “they simply ignored it in a misguided and dishonest effort to execute Balsillie’s bankruptcy scheme.”

NHL officials say the bankruptcy filing is an attempt by Balsillie to circumvent the league’s franchise sale and relocation process.

The league’s case centers on a document containing “unconditional proxies” signed by Moyes on Nov. 14, 2008.

“From that point forward, I was completely responsible for control of the ownership interest in and all rights to manage the club and arena management,” Bettman said in his declaration.

Bettman said that on Jan. 23, he told Moyes to fire Coyotes chairman and chief executive officer Jeff Shumway. Shumway, in his declaration, said that he was not fired but “voluntarily resigned.”

Shumway and Moyes have filed documents insisting the team never was controlled by the NHL, although the league took over funding of the franchise in November. “The NHL did not manage, control, run, or direct Coyotes Hockey, the Coyotes Hockey Team or any of their related operations, nor to my knowledge did it attempt to do so,” Moyes said in a document filed last Friday. □

NBA Playoffs

Magic moment: Orlando eliminates Boston 101-82

By JIMMY GOLEN

AP Sports Writer

BOSTON — Dwight Howard and Hedo Turkoglu helped dethrone the defending champion Boston Celtics and give Orlando a chance to bring a crown to the Magic Kingdom.

Howard had 12 points, 16 rebounds and five blocked shots, and Turkoglu had 25 points with 12 assists in Game 7 on Sunday night, leading Orlando into the Eastern Conference finals 101-82.

Orlando trailed for just 36 seconds and built a lead it couldn't squander to earn the right to play LeBron James and the Cavaliers for a spot in the NBA finals. Game 1 is Wednesday in Cleveland; Orlando won the season series 2-1.

"We believe. We believe we can go all the way," Howard said. "It's going to get harder."

Ray Allen scored 23 points for Boston, and Paul Pierce had 16 before they were taken out of the game for a courtesy cheer

with 2:30 left and the Magic up 99-78. The other member of the new Big Three, Kevin Garnett, awaited them on the bench, where he watched the whole series in street clothes with a right knee strain.

Garnett's absence derailed the Celtics' title defense before it got started, forcing them to fight through a seven-overtime, seven-game series against Chicago in the first round and leaving them perpetually playing from behind in the second.

"We still felt like this was a team that could have gone to the championship and won it, regardless of the injuries," Pierce said. "It felt like we ran out of gas."

Celtics coach Doc Rivers said Garnett had been holding off on having surgery on the chance he could come back if the team prolonged its season. "There's no way he was going to play the next series," Rivers said. "We were hoping. But I didn't think it will happen."

The Magic nearly blew a 28-point lead in Game 1, then did

waste a 14-point lead in Game 5 to give the Celtics a 3-2 advantage in the best-of-seven series. Boston, which won the last of its unprecedented 17 NBA titles last year, had never lost a series after being ahead 3-2.

But Orlando came back from a 10-point deficit on Thursday night to force Game 7.

And there was no panic this time. Just a lot of Magic.

"I would like to say we played the game exactly the way we wanted.

We actually played it better," Magic coach Stan Van Gundy said. "When you look at a team that's 32-0 when leading a series 3-2 and then you win by 19 points, that's a big win. I can't say that I've ever had one that I've ever been happier with."

Orlando led by 14 in the second quarter before Boston cut it to 45-42 in the third period. Rondo's long 2-pointer at the buzzer to end the quarter made it a 66-61 game, but Orlando scored the first eight points of the fourth to open a double-



Orlando Magic's Dwight Howard dunks against the Boston Celtics in the fourth quarter of Game 7 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinal playoff series in Boston on Sunday, May 17, 2009. The Magic won 101-82 and advanced to the conference finals against the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Associated Press

digit lead.

Orlando led 81-64 with 8:04 left when Howard picked up his fifth foul and went to the bench. Boston cut the deficit to 90-78 on Allen's 3-pointer with 4:12 to play.

But Turkoglu sank a 3-pointer,

then Kendrick Perkins was called for a charge and Turkoglu made a fadeaway jumper to extend the lead to 17 points. Turkoglu was 9 for 12 from the field, scoring 10 points in the fourth quarter alone. □



CHICAGO (AP) — Ivan Rodriguez hit his 300th home run and Lance Berkman had two hits and an RBI as Houston snapped the Cubs' five-game winning streak.

Rodriguez launched a two-run homer into the center-field basket to put the Astros ahead 4-2. It was his 293rd homer as a catcher, good for seventh all-time.

Houston starter Brian Moehler

(1-0) pitched five innings to get his first victory since Sept. 10, 2008, against Pittsburgh. Moehler was backed by a strong performance from the Houston bullpen. Tim Lincecum pitched a perfect sixth, Alberto Arias pitched 1 1-3 scoreless innings.

Chris Sampson pitched 1 2-3 innings for his first career save despite giving up a solo shot to Alfonso Soriano and an

NL Roundup

Ivan Rodriguez hits 300th homer in Houston victory

RBI single to Milton Bradley. Derrek Lee was 4 for 5 with a home run for the Cubs.

Rich Harden (4-2), who had won his four previous decisions, gave up four runs and six hits. He had seven strikeouts and walked three.

Giants 2, Mets 0

At San Francisco, Matt Cain stymied New York and singled in a run to help San Francisco end an eight-game losing streak to the Mets.

Bengie Molina also had an RBI single as San Francisco snapped a four-game skid and avoided a four-game home sweep in a game that featured a rare three balks by Mets starter Mike Pelfrey (4-1).

The last pitcher to have three balks in a game was Al Leiter for Toronto against Minnesota on April 23, 1994.

New York's potent offense couldn't get to Cain (4-1) after producing 24 runs, 42 hits and 13 stolen bases in the first three games of the series.

He pitched six shutout innings, while Bob Howry, Affeldt and Brian Wilson finished the five-hit shutout. Wilson earned his ninth save.

Brewers 8, Cardinals 2

At St. Louis, Prince Fielder hit his fourth homer in the last five games to help Milwaukee win its fifth in a row.

Manny Parra (3-4) won his third straight start and the Brewers got two-run singles from J.J. Hardy and Jason Kendall to win their 11th in 13 games.

Fielder has four homers and 10 RBIs the last five games. Todd Wellemeyer (3-4) walked seven, two more

than his previous career worst. Despite those woes, Wellemeyer didn't allow a hit his last 4 2-3 innings after the Brewers batted around in a the first while extending him for 41 pitches.

Dodgers 12, Marlins 5

At Miami, Clayton Kershaw (2-3) benefited from three fine defensive plays in the first two innings, then settled down. Given a 6-0 lead by the third, the 21-year-old left-hander struck out nine and pitched around four walks.

In other NL games it was L.A. Dodgers 12, Florida 5; Philadelphia 8, Washington 6; Pittsburgh 11, Colorado 4; Milwaukee 8, St. Louis 2; Houston 6, Chicago Cubs 5; San Diego 3, Cincinnati 1; and San Francisco 2, N.Y. Mets 0. □



World record holder of the men's 50 meter freestyle, Fred Bousquet rubs his suit prior to the men's final 50 meter freestyle during the the USA Swimming Grand Prix Series Charlotte Ultraswim in Charlotte, N.C., Saturday, May 16, 2009.

Associated Press

FINA meets into night to approve swimsuit list

GRAHAM DUNBAR

AP Sports Writer

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — A panel of swimming experts met late into Monday evening to decide which high-tech swimsuits will be approved for racing on a list scheduled for release Tuesday.

The sport's governing body FINA cut off access to its fourth-floor office headquarters as members of its specially appointed commission sifted through laboratory test results for hundreds of different suit models.

FINA officials refused to disclose details of the panel's work which seeks to restore some order to a sport where technology has helped render the record book almost unrecognizable within 15 months of space-age suits hitting the market.

Commission members are deciding which suits can be worn at the FINA world championships scheduled for July 19-Aug. 2 in Rome, and for the rest of the year.

The list will be revealed after they visit laboratories at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne where suits were tested for thickness, buoyancy and water resistance last month. □

AL Roundup

Pitcher Sonnanstine goes into bat for Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — Andy Sonnanstine delivered after a pregame mistake forced the pitcher to bat Sunday, hitting an RBI double in the Rays' 7-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

The game was delayed 13 minutes before the bottom of the first due to a lineup card error by the Rays that listed both Ben Zobrist and Evan Longoria as the third baseman. Longoria was supposed to be designated hitter, but Tampa Bay lost that position because of the error and was forced to put Sonnanstine in the third spot of the lineup.

Sonnanstine (2-4) went 1 for 3, including a run-scoring double in the fourth. He also reached on a failed sacrifice in the first and struck out looking in the third.

David Huff (0-1) took the loss for the Indians.

Yankees 3, Twins 2, 10 innings

At New York, Johnny Damon homered in the 10th inning, giving the Yankees their third straight comeback win over the Twins that was capped by a game-ending hit.

Alex Rodriguez homered in



the seventh to start New York's rally from a two-run deficit, as the Yankees extended their winning streak to a season-best five games.

With one out, Damon drove a full-count pitch from Jesse Crain (2-2) into the second deck of right-field stands for his team-high 10th home run and third career game-ender.

The last time New York had three consecutive walk-off wins was August 27-29, 1972. Alfredo Aceves (2-0) pitched a perfect inning for the win.

Mariners 3, Red Sox 2

At Seattle, Franklin Gutierrez singled under the glove of

third baseman Mike Lowell to score Ronny Cedeno with two outs in the ninth inning and give the Mariners the win.

Cedeno reached second with two outs, after what should have been his third-out grounder was thrown into a camera well behind first base on the fly by shortstop Nick Green for a generously scored single and error, Green's second of the game and eighth of the season.

Ramon Ramirez (4-1), who had allowed one run in 20 1-3 innings coming in, intentionally walked Ichiro Suzuki before Gutierrez

finally ended the game.

David Aardsma (1-1) picked up the win in relief for Seattle.

Tigers 11, Athletics 7

At Detroit, Ramon Santiago and Curtis Granderson each hit three-run homers, and the Tigers overcame a six-run deficit to finish a three-game sweep of the A's.

Santiago, who also had an RBI triple among his four hits and scored three runs, put Detroit ahead 8-6 with his homer off Santiago Casilla.

Trevor Cahill (2-3) took the loss, allowing seven runs in 2 1-3 innings for the A's. Zach Miner (3-1) picked up the win, and the teams each used five pitchers in the game.

The Tigers pulled off an unusual 6-5-3 double play in the eighth inning, with Brandon Inge taking the throw at second base because Detroit was shifted for Jason Giambi.

Blue Jays 8, White Sox 2

At Toronto, Roy Halladay won his fifth straight start and Adam Lind hit one of three Toronto homers as the Blue Jays won their AL-leading 26th game. □



Ji Young Oh, right, of South Korea, holds up the champions trophy after winning the Sybase Classic golf tournament by 14-under par at Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, N.J., Sunday, May 17, 2009.

TOM CANAVAN

AP Sports Writer

CLIFTON, New Jersey (AP) — Ji Young Oh closed with a 2-under 70 Sunday to win the \$2 million Sybase Classic by four shots against a field containing the likes of Brittany Lincicome, Paula Creamer, Suzann Pettersen and Michelle Wie.

The 20-year-old, straight-hitting South Korean went into the final round with the idea that it was her tournament to lose and she went out and won it.

Oh had the second best final round on a raw, cold, windy day to finish at 14 under. She benefited from a couple of mistakes by Pettersen on the back nine to capture her second LPGA Tour

Associated Press

Oh wins Sybase Classic, beats Pettersen by 4 shots

title.

She won the State Farm Classic last year in Illinois.

"At the State Farm I didn't expect to win that tournament, the opportunity presented itself to me," she said through an interpreter. "I played with a lot of great players (in this event) and from the first day when I made that hole-in-one I knew that trophy was waiting for me and I needed to do everything in my power to win this tournament.

"I really wanted it badly and there was no way I wasn't going to get it."

Oh started the round tied with Pettersen for the lead with Lincicome one shot back, and Wie and Creamer three behind.

Wie, the 19-year-old star who is still seeking her first LPGA win, and Creamer never challenged. Both hit into the water on the par-5 fifth hole, and Wie did it again in taking a double bogey at No. 12. They finished tied for third at 8-under on the Upper Montclair Country Club.

Lincicome, who won the Kraft Nabisco Championship last month for her first title, struggled all day with her putting and finished at 6-under.

That left Oh and Pettersen to vie for the \$300,000 top prize.

Pettersen bogeyed the first two holes and fell three behind after three holes. However, the 28-year-old Norwegian, who now has five top-10 finishes this year, made up the difference with a 5-foot birdie at No. 6 and bogeys by Oh at the eighth and 10th holes.

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Ministro Defensa renuncia para buscar la presidencia en Colombia

BOGOTA (Reuters) - El Ministro de Defensa de Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, renunció el lunes a su cargo con la intención de ser candidato a la presidencia en el 2010, una posible señal de que el presidente Alvaro Uribe no buscará su segunda reelección consecutiva.

La renuncia del dirigente político, quien lidera la lucha contra el narcotráfico, la guerrilla izquierdista y los grupos armados ilegales integrados por antiguos paramilitares, se produjo a un día de que el Senado se reúna para aprobar un referendo que busca autorizar una segunda reelección de Uribe.

“Considero que después de este periodo al frente del Ministerio de Defensa es necesario pasar la posta y continuar mi vida de servicio público en otros escenarios. Por lo mismo y con todo respeto, le presento mi renuncia efectiva a partir del próximo 23 de mayo”, dijo Santos en una carta dirigida a Uribe y que leyó en una conferencia de prensa.

“Pasaré de ministro de Defensa a ser un simple pero decidido promotor de su causa. Me



El ministro de Defensa de Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, habla con la prensa en Bogotá, 18 mayo 2009. REUTERS/John Vizcaino

dedicaré como usted lo hace, a trabajar, trabajar y trabajar por la continuidad de la Seguridad Democrática en la que no podemos bajar la guardia ni un solo milímetro mientras la bestia del terrorismo siga viva”, agregó.

El dimitente funcionario logró como ministro de Defensa los más contundentes éxitos en

la historia del país en la lucha contrala guerrilladelas Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) con la muerte de varios de sus principales líderes como Raúl Reyes, Tomás Medina Caracas y Martín Caballero, durante operaciones militares.

También coordinó el rescate de la ex candidata presidencial

Ingrid Betancourt, tres estadounidenses y 11 efectivos de las Fuerzas Armadas secuestrados por las FARC y promovió una campaña en medio de la que han desertado miles de combatientes de la guerrilla.

CANDIDATURA CONDICIONADA

Santos, de 57 años y quien

pertenece al Partido de la U, reiteró que sólo lanzará su candidatura presidencial si el presidente Uribe decide no ser candidato en el 2010 para buscar un tercer período de Gobierno.

“Si el presidente decide lanzarse, él cuenta con mi total apoyo, es el compromiso que he hecho con él y con el país. Si él decide no lanzarse a una nueva reelección, yo seré candidato”, aseguró.

Uribe no ha dicho con claridad si buscará su tercer periodo de Gobierno en el 2010 si queda habilitado para aspirar a su segunda reelección inmediata.

En la eventualidad de que Uribe decline o no pueda ser candidato, Santos es uno de los políticos con más posibilidades de ganar la elección presidencial de mayo del 2010 junto con el ex alcalde de Medellín Sergio Fajardo, de acuerdo con recientes encuestas de opinión.

La renuncia del ministro provocó diferentes reacciones al interior de la coalición de Gobierno que apoya a Uribe y a la que pertenece Santos, así como en el opositor Partido Liberal. □

Presidente venezolano visita Ecuador

QUITO (AP) - El presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez asistirá el domingo a la conmemoración de la independencia ecuatoriana y se reunirá con su colega Rafael Correa para evaluar la relación bilateral.

La Presidencia de Ecuador informó el lunes en un comunicado que el mandatario venezolano participará el domingo en la efemérides de la gesta encabezada por Simón Bolívar y Antonio José de Sucre, próceres en los cuales Chávez dice inspirarse para impulsar su revolución en Venezuela.

El lunes, los presidentes y funcionarios de los dos países analizarán el cumplimiento de los convenios bilaterales vigentes y explorarán nuevos proyectos conjuntos. Más tarde, Chávez y Correa irán a la isla Puná donde visitarán una futura zona de explotación de gas en el golfo de Guayaquil, puerto ubicado 280 kilómetros al suroeste de Quito.

Ecuador y Venezuela mantienen varios convenios de cooperación, entre los que destaca el intercambio de crudo ecuatoriano por derivados venezolanos que ha permitido un ahorro para Ecuador de 173 millones de dólares entre febrero del 2007 y 2008, según la Cancillería. □

Dos sismos causan alarma en sur de Perú

LIMA (Reuters) - Dos sismos causaron el lunes alarma en algunas localidades al sur de la capital de Perú, obligando a personas a salir de sus casas aunque no se registraban daños, dijeron testigos y autoridades.

Según el Servicio Geológico de Estados Unidos, la magnitud del primer sismo fue de 5,7 y la del segundo de 4,9.

El Instituto Geofísico de Perú dijo que el primer sismo se produjo a las 09.01 hora local (1401 GMT) y tuvo su epicentro a 41 kilómetros al sur este de la localidad de San Juan Marcona en la región de Ica, a unos 450 kilómetros al sur de Lima.

El segundo sismo tuvo como epicentro a la localidad de Puquio, de la región andina de Ayacucho, como la zona más cercana al epicentro, que se sintió también en la vecina Ica.

Testigos de la localidad de Marcona dijeron que los movimientos obligaron a los pobladores y a los escolares a salir de sus casas y centros de estudios, sin que se registraran víctimas o daños en las viviendas.

En Marcona opera la mina de hierro Shougang

Hierro Perú, de la estatal china Shougang. La minería es considerada como uno de los motores de la economía de Perú, el segundo productor mundial de cobre y zinc y el primero de plata. El gerente general de Shougang, Raúl Vera, dijo a Reuters que la minera operaba normalmente. “No pasa nada”, precisó.

Perú, donde frecuentemente ocurren sismos, sufrió en agosto del 2007 un terremoto de magnitud 8,0 en la costa centro y sur del país, que provocó la muerte de unas 600 personas y dejó miles de viviendas destruidas. □



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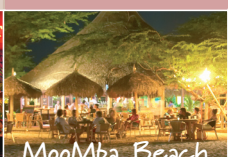
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